









# Years of Blindness

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H. G. QUARITCH WALES

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NEW YORK

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

1943



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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

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# I

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## FRONTIER OF THE PAST

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"THIS IS THAILAND." The great letters in English and Siamese seemed to stare down insolently from the blatant, newly erected sign that, edging out from the jungle wall, encroached a foot or two onto the highway with the very evident intention that none should mistake its implied warning. It was July, 1941, and I was a staff officer concerned with matters of intelligence in North Malaya. I had driven out from headquarters more from curiosity than any other motive, just to take another look at the frontier where at any moment now it seemed possible that history would be written. I had told my Malay syce to stop the car well on this side of the border. I had no wish to repeat the experience of two young Australian officers who a week or two earlier had dashed across the frontier and had been arrested by police masquerading as road repairers. It had given us no end of trouble to get them back and convince the Thailand authorities of their harmless if boisterous intentions.

I too was now merely a cog in a huge machine, the In-

dian Army, and was bound by the same rule that forbade any member of the forces to cross the frontier even if invited. The fact that despite my by no means rugged health I had been called to put my knowledge temporarily at the disposal of my own country meant that I was no longer *persona grata* in the pleasant land that under its old name of Siam I had known so well for nearly two decades, and where as a civilian I should still have received a friendly welcome across the threshold.

It had been an object for a drive, a break from dull headquarters routine. But there was nothing to see beyond the very discouraging signpost. Scrub and jungle limited the vision, though I knew that half a mile further on around the bend was the little Thai customhouse. I was about to tell the syce to turn the car round when I noticed an automobile approaching from the north and warned him to wait until it had passed. To my surprise it came to a standstill just on its own side of the border, and out stepped two smartly dressed Siamese, one a young army officer, the other evidently the customs officer.

Both seemed slightly embarrassed. Obviously my car was not the one expected, and I was keeping somebody else's appointment. But the army officer quickly recovered his composure, and while the customs official continued to stare awkwardly, he saluted and addressed me a trifle cheekily in excellent English.

"What brings you to the frontier? Having a look at Thailand?"

"Yes," I replied. "Unfortunately one gets a very limited impression of it from here. The scenery is still somewhat

Malayan. But I understand Bangkok is a magnificent city. I should like to see the temples there some day."

"Bangkok is a magnificent city," he said, drawing himself up proudly. Then, brushing aside my mention of temples, he added, "Nowadays, you know, we concentrate on more modern things. You'd be surprised at our new military academy and—"

But whatever else it was I should have been surprised at I never knew, for our conversation was abruptly interrupted by the sound of another car approaching behind me. Turning round I saw that the expected guests were arriving.

"Your friends?" I ventured.

"Two distinguished Japanese entomologists." He smiled. "The government is interested in making a survey."

The explanation seemed so absurd that I can only suppose it was the official one he had been told to give to anyone he chanced to meet on the frontier. The Japanese gentlemen descended from their car, looking at me a trifle uncomprehendingly. Bows, smiles, and salutes were exchanged, but, as there was simply nothing to be said, I got into my car and ordered the syce to drive home.

If there was nothing to be said, there was certainly some food for thought. The Japanese were of course perfectly within their rights in thus passing through Malaya. They were probably passengers from one of the Japanese N.Y.K. liners that still called occasionally at Penang. In any case, there were Japanese still at large all over the country as planters, mining concessionaries, and businessmen. For

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fear of in any way making worse the already delicate relations between Great Britain and Japan, the Malayan authorities were very anxious to avoid giving offense. Yet there was something about this chance meeting on the frontier that brought home to me very forcefully the pass to which things were coming—from the white man's point of view. In Malaya one did not notice it; things went on just as usual, for the Asiatics were still of little account there politically. In India there was of course the usual undercurrent of trouble—one expected it. Burma too.

But somehow the complete change that had come over Siam since I first knew the country seemed scarcely believable. How different was this self-assured, smartly uniformed young officer from the old-time, slovenly, ill-educated Siamese military man with his inevitable row of meaningless medals. And now here were Japanese being received as honored guests and doubtless as trusted advisers. Apart from the missionaries, most of whom lived upcountry, as did the tin miners and the assistants of the teak companies, the foreign community in Siam was greatly reduced in numbers. This was most noticeable in Bangkok, where the ranks of European teachers and officials had been thinned in recent years, while the number of foreign firms that found it worth while to maintain office staffs in Bangkok had also dwindled. The exodus had been begun by the oil companies in 1939. Now there was scant politeness for those businessmen who remained, unless they happened to be Italians or Germans. For the British minister and many other diplomats, these were days of anxiety and foreboding. Whether Japan's example was

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basically responsible for this upsurge of nationalism or not, she certainly intended to profit by it. There was little doubt, I felt, that whatever was coming could not now be long delayed.

In Siam the developments that seemed to portend the knell of the white man's influence in the Orient had been more startlingly dramatic than anywhere else; or so it seemed to me as, leaning back in the car, I let my mind wander to that incredible old Siam, not of a couple of hundred years ago, but of less than twenty. My thoughts flashed back to that last great coronation scene in 1925 when Prajadhipok succeeded his gay and portly brother who had died a few months earlier. It was the coronation of what has proved to be the last absolute monarch of the last remaining independent kingdom in southeastern Asia.

The gorgeous ceremony had taken place in the gilded old throne room which, with its magnificent teak pillars, is one of the many impressive buildings of Bangkok's vast Grand Palace. I remembered how the body of the hall had been filled with rows of seats for the diplomatic corps, the many European advisers, and the brightly uniformed Siamese officials of high rank who were gathered to pay homage to His Majesty. In an atmosphere of excited expectancy they were all facing the curtained stage at one end of the hall, on which the rites were to take place. Suddenly a hush fell on the gathered assembly as an official waved a wand, a fanfare sounded, and the curtains parted to reveal H. M. King Prajadhipok, seated in his glittering medieval robes upon a golden throne. Around him were grouped his gorgeously clad household officials and cham-



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berlains. Above him was suspended the great many-tiered white umbrella, symbol of full sovereignty. Behind him an attendant switched a gilded fan, another stood at hand with a flywhisk.

Hardly had the curtain ceased to move than a kneeling page handed the King the Great Crown of Victory, balanced on an embroidered cushion. Taking in his small hands the conical bejeweled headpiece, the King raised it aloft and gently lowered it onto his head. Like the pope, the king has always crowned himself. At the auspicious moment of the crowning the Brahman priests seated below blew their conches, and ancient cannon boomed from the palace walls without. The King sat motionless, like a gilded doll, while the doyen of the diplomatic corps read a long address of felicitation to the new monarch. The scene on the stage was an impressive one, skillfully illuminated by means of modern electric floodlights. Those in the body of the hall sat with their eyes riveted on the stage, the Europeans at least appreciating that they were perhaps for the last time witnessing something that belonged to the Arabian Nights.

Although I was present I viewed the procedure from a different and a closer angle. In fact, I was a part of the scene itself. On the stage a few yards to the right of the King I stood in my full-dress uniform—sky-blue tail coat adorned with silver braid, white knee breeches and silk stockings, court sword, and black cocked hat with its plume of osprey feathers. Being young I liked to imagine becoming a second Phaulkon, the amazing Greek adventurer who wormed his way into the good offices of the seventeenth-

century King Narai and rose to be his prime minister. He all but converted the king to Christianity and might have gained possession of the kingdom in the name of Louis XIV but for a timely rising on the part of the disgruntled Siamese, as a result of which both Phaulkon and his patron King Narai lost their lives.

But opportunities for European adventurers at oriental courts were drawing to an end. I was actually the last European ever to be appointed to the Lord Chamberlain's Department which, with the Royal Household, was one of the only two departments privileged to be in such close proximity to the king on a state occasion. I was the last European ever to wear that exotic uniform of blue and silver; moreover, although I did not know it at the time, not many years were to elapse before the whole glittering structure of royalty in Siam, bolstered as it had been by the interests of the white man, was to totter and collapse with the advent of a new regime.

On that brilliant day there was no hint of such a fate. The King seemed as anxious as his forebears to carry out his duties in truly traditional style. But when the curtains fell at the end of the speeches, and the King relaxed from his doll-like attitude and turned to chat with his courtiers, there was one curious incident. Lifting the great crown from his already weary head and handing it to the page, he turned toward me with a smile and the unintentionally portentous words, "*Nak ti dio.*" ("It's certainly heavy.")

A day or two later a royal levee was held in the magnificent new Renaissance throne hall designed by an Italian

architect and carried out in the finest marbles. The King and Queen had walked around the great hall chatting to the assembled officials and guests, and now we had all filed into another vast apartment where there were buffet tables loaded with refreshments of all kinds. It was another brilliant scene, to which the varied and colorful uniforms and the unending display of medals and decorations gave more than a hint of comic opera.

Everyone was gossiping over the details of court and official life in Bangkok, in the intervals of filling and draining glasses and sampling the finest delicacies that East and West could provide. A stout little Frenchman in the orange and purple uniform of the Royal Wardrobes Department was the first to sense any change in the atmosphere of this Siamese paradise. He was a particular friend of mine and a connoisseur of everything good to eat and drink. Elbowing his way past me to the buffet he remarked, "Wales, what do you think of this champagne?"

"I can drink it," I said.

"But the vintage—it is too awful. This is something that I call most unroyal, to give us such stuff to drink. Impossible formerly," he fumed.

"His Majesty is of an economical turn of mind," chimed in a smartly clad Danish officer of the Provincial Gendarmerie; "there will be changes in other things besides champagne. I would not be surprised to see a Chinese cook at forty ticals a month taking the place of your compatriot Eveque. I don't know about the Wardrobes Department; uniforms will not perhaps be so important."

This was too much for the little Frenchman, who, like

the rest of his countrymen, was jealous of the special consideration enjoyed at court by the Danes.

"No, quite impossible, we French officials are all safeguarded by the treaty of 1893. About the others I do not know," he replied stiffly.

For the time being these fears proved groundless. The King certainly introduced economies among his personal staff, continued to live in his private residence instead of moving into one of the royal palaces, and exchanged the elderly Siamese lord who had been the royal chauffeur at a thousand ticals a month for an ordinary syce at forty. Otherwise life went on much as usual. I had already been two years at the Siamese Court under Rama VI, and my agreement had another two years to run under his successor. The real changes that were to come were not introduced from above; they were to result from revolution that was even then brewing underground. Rama VI had surrounded himself with gross personal extravagances that were beginning to upset the country's finances. King Prajadhipok saw the danger, saw the necessity for reform, but he was surrounded by influences that made him powerless to do more than effect a few personal economies.

Political conditions in Siam at about this time had changed very little since she began to adapt herself to Western ways in the second half of the last century. The only really highly educated people had always been members of the royal family. Under a series of enlightened rulers Siam had made great progress in the only way then open to her—that is to say, by benefits introduced from above. In a truly paternal manner the kings had provided

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for their semiliterate subjects, more than ten million of them, by introducing improvements in irrigation, sanitation, and communications in such degree as they personally thought advisable. Their policies had been implemented by their relatives the princes, and by the very few other Siamese of upper class who had the education and ability to understand what was required of them. But gradually the personal power of the king grew weaker, perhaps in the ordinary course of degeneration that usually heralds the close of a dynasty. Was there not a well-known prophecy that the domination of the Chakkri family would end a hundred and fifty years after the founding of Bangkok? A ghostly monk had been seen crossing the new Menam bridge. The apparition of Phaya Tak, the ruler who had saved the country from the Burmese and founded the new city, had been appearing in the graveyards along the river bank.

The rule of the princes continued to benefit the country in many ways, but mostly in the direction of window dressing in the capital. After all, it was there that the princes lived, and there that visiting foreigners were most likely to appraise the progress that was being made and the ability of the Siamese to conduct themselves as an independent nation. The good will of the Europeans was more important than the attitude of the great mass of the Siamese or, for that matter, of the large Chinese community who occasionally gave the government qualms by reason of the hold they were getting over the country's trade, especially the rice milling. They had no diplomatic status, however, and were tolerated only because there was no Siamese mid-

dle class with the knowledge and industry to venture into trade.

The Europeans were on a different footing. They were there because they were the only ones who understood large-scale trade and had the necessary capital and knowledge to develop the country's teak forests and tin mines. And quite evidently they intended to stay even if the Siamese could learn the work and obtain the capital. There were also many Europeans in the Siamese government service. The princes had engaged them in the earlier days because without them they would have been unequal to the task of modernizing the administration. They had stayed largely for political reasons. The diplomatic representative of each country schemed to see that so far as was possible his nation had its fair share of advisers and officials.

When Siam entered the First World War, a result of the persuasive powers of the Allies, the Germans, who had held an iron grasp on the railroad administration, were displaced by British engineers. British influence was also predominant in the customs, in the all-important department of education, and by tradition there had always been a British Financial Adviser. Since the unfortunate affair of 1893, when the French had blockaded Bangkok and absorbed a further slice of Siamese territory, the French diplomats had been actively attempting to repair the wounds and to re-establish confidence in order to obtain a larger share in the "advisory business," which was tending to become restricted to appointments as legal advisers, as French language professors, and in the royal kitchens.

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Wherever they could, without too much diplomatic pressure being brought to bear upon them from other quarters, the princes appointed Danes to advisory positions. At one time the Danes had officered the navy and they still controlled the provincial gendarmerie, the force on which the government depended to aid the more backward provincial Siamese officials in the collection of the revenue. The Danes were of course chosen for the very good reason that, while they knew as much about modern methods as any other European, it was felt that their advice was less likely to be biased since they could not possibly have any imperial aspirations. To the relief of all and as a means of pouring oil upon the sometimes conflicting international currents, the post of adviser to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held by an American. And it must be said that his duties were always discharged with honor and a complete absence of discrimination, guided only by the highest principles of what was good for Siam alone.

If there was much diplomatic rivalry for favors of office in Siam, this in no way interfered with the growth of a pleasantly cosmopolitan social life. Everyone was well paid, whether he was in some government department or was the employee of a foreign firm. Wealth was too abundant for any petty international jealousies of the moment to affect the general spirit of good will with which everyone was quite happily exploiting the country. The British had their tin and teak concessions and their great commercial firms. The French too had their teak forests and their other business interests. The Italians were busily decorat-

ing new palaces. The Dutch and the Belgians were each represented by importing houses; while the Danes had a finger in every pie, ran the coasting steamship services, the power station, and the streetcars, and had a very prosperous cement factory.

The Sports Club, with its splendid grounds presented by an earlier king so that the Europeans would not lack the exercise that he had learned was indispensable to many of them, was a center of this cosmopolitan life. The cricket and football fields were in the main patronized by the British, but everyone could play bridge and mahjong, become an enthusiastic devotee of the excellent horse racing, or merely quietly sip absinthe in the bar. Both here and in the motley collection of hotels, wherever a group of men sat around a table, you might see Danes, Frenchmen, Americans, British, and Dutch amicably conversing. The charm of Bangkok society in those days was its informal nature, for, as in Shanghai, there was a complete freedom from the conventions that shackled life in a British colony. Yet one might be sure that wherever such a mixed group were gathered together, on the club verandah or elsewhere, the language would be English, still the master tongue of the Orient.

Another thing that was so delightful about Bangkok life was that one could mix on equal terms with the Siamese officials. Among those who frequented the club were the younger princes and the small but growing number of Siamese who had been educated in England and had thoroughly imbibed our ways; there were also the old-fashioned, mandarin-like Siamese, who might be slovenly



and inefficient but who were always thoroughly contented and affable gentlemen not in the least disturbed by the hold which Europeans exercised on the administration. They were still nominally masters in their own house, and the deep gulf fixed between the European and the Asiatic in India and the colonies did not exist in Bangkok.

It was mainly owing to the influence of the conservative old princes and officials that the atmosphere of medieval pageantry continued to brighten court life in the capital. Religious festivals, royal cremations, birthdays, processions of one sort or another followed with such quick succession that it was often difficult to settle down to any serious work for more than a week or two consecutively. Not only were these festive occasions frequent, but they each lasted a very long time. The King's birthday alone would last a week. Then, of course, other friendly monarchs had birthdays. Particularly there were King George's birthday, the French president's birthday, the American president's birthday, and—no more important, in fact a trifle less so, than anybody else's at that time—the Emperor of Japan's birthday. Whenever one wanted to cash a check at one of the European banks it was common to find that one had overlooked the fact that it was somebody's birthday. Failing that, the bank was probably closed because the staff were occupied in the very important business of running the "tote" at the Sports Club race meeting.

The Siamese are Buddhists, as every tourist knows who has seen the sprawling monasteries of Bangkok with their tapering gilded pagodas and glittering multi-colored tiles. But it was the old Hindu court usages that claimed the

best attentions of the Siamese and drew a crowd of admiring European residents at various seasons of the year. There was the First Ploughing, when the Minister of Agriculture, dressed in ancient robes and wearing a tall jeweled crown (for he was regarded as a king for the occasion) opened the rice planting season by ploughing the first furrow on a field near the city. He himself guided the pair of gaily decorated oxen, while prognostications as to the likely yield of the harvest were drawn from the type of foodstuff the oxen condescended to choose from a variety offered them after the ceremony.

On the occasion of the Swinging Ceremony another Siamese lord similarly clad was carried through the streets on a palanquin to a certain crossroads in the city, where there was an enormous red-painted teak swing a hundred and fifty feet high. From this a number of Siamese acrobats were obliged to swing dangerously while they tried to seize with their teeth a money bag suspended on a long bamboo. All this had the object of entertaining the Siamese nobleman, who was supposed to represent the god Shiva come down to earth for a visit. And it was for fear of breaking the spell and bringing disaster upon the country that the nobleman was obliged to stand on one leg throughout the procedure.

Really great occasions were those that occurred less frequently. There were the royal cremations, which, except in the case of a king, only took place when enough dead princes and princesses had been accumulated to make the huge expenditure involved worth while. Far from being considered sad affairs, they were occasion for every kind

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of feasting and entertainment, mainly at the royal expense. The huge catafalque erected in the middle of the vast cremation ground took months to build. It was made of the finest teak that the country could produce, painted and gilded and hung with costly imported silks and velvets. On the appointed day, behind the reigning king on his palanquin and the royal urns of the departed, there followed an assorted procession which gave the army a splendid opportunity to show its paces. Behind the purple plumed dragoons, mounted on diminutive but sprightly and elegantly trapped Siamese ponies, there were sure to follow the half-dozen old gun carriages that had been purchased around 1900 and were still considered good enough to form the Royal Artillery of Siam.

Everyone knows that a Siamese king must possess at least one white elephant, and one of the first thoughts of King Prajadhipok's advisers, once the coronation was successfully concluded, was to provide him with a new white elephant. Fortunately a tiring search was saved by one being born just at that time in the herd of tame elephants maintained by one of the British companies engaged in the extraction of teak in North Siam. Of course, a white elephant should really be captured alive by the royal hunters, and this led to some doubt as to its authenticity until the astrologers sent up from Bangkok duly reported that it had pink toe nails and all the other correct points.

A special truck provided with a shower bath and a host of palace attendants had to be sent to bring down the young white elephant and its mother by railroad from Chiang-mai. I was among the crowd of European and Siamese ad-

visers who awaited it at the royal railroad station, ordinarily used only by the royal family. The little elephant trotted out, blew dust in the face of the high priest who, after anointing it with consecrated water, was handing it some sugar cane on a golden plate. I gave it some sugar cane, and so did everyone else. At last, in imminent danger of serious indigestion, the little beast and its great swaying mother were shepherded off by fan-waving and umbrella-carrying attendants to the special little red-roofed palace that had been erected for it in the palace grounds.

But this was only the beginning. The King came to "christen" the little demi-god by handing him a stick of special red sugar cane on which his name and titles had been engraved. The playful little creature showed proof of his true royal descent by not hesitating to blow dust in the face of His Majesty. The celebrations following the white elephant's arrival lasted for several weeks. Every night the royal demesne was thrown open to the public, and for their delectation, though ostensibly for that of the white elephant, open-air theatres staged continuous performances in the grounds. There were shadow plays, masked plays, puppet shows, and tumblers, and juggling performances the like of which it was said had not been seen in Siam for decades, and—it need scarcely be added—arc never likely to be seen again.

At entertainment and pageantry the Siamese were adept, and they certainly had an interpretation of hospitality unsurpassed elsewhere. Whenever foreign delegates arrived, the state opera troupe was sure to give a special performance of beautiful Siamese dancing in their honor. At the

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Congress of Far Eastern Medicine held in Bangkok about 1927, the medical delegates coming from all over Asia were astonished to find that they were to be entertained in the grounds of one of the royal colleges with all the lavish display of ancient theatrical entertainment that had shortly before greeted the arrival of the white elephant.

Unbelievable as it seems, this is not a picture of eighteenth- or even nineteenth-century Siam. It represents the state of affairs in the twenties of the present century. Superficially it seemed to suit everybody who mattered. The princes and high officials in the luxury of their palatial residences had no qualms of conscience at the backward state of the masses upcountry. They were lulled by the comfortable thought that it was better for the country to advance slowly. And who could deny that very real if leisurely progress had been made during the last half-century? But this sentiment was in danger of becoming a cancer. It was too often the burden of the advice of European officials and diplomats who were only too pleased that this picturesque, traditional old Siam should be retained as long as possible. Was it not an admirable solution of the awkward problem as to how the country could be divided up to please everybody?

Although I had left the Siamese government service in 1928, I had frequently revisited the country and was familiar with the series of changes, so full of significance for all Asia, that had completely altered the picture. But it was now two years since my last visit, and the headway that Japanese penetration had been making seemed almost incredible. In the old days the few Japanese members of the

community, the barbers and photographers, had counted for little. They went about their business very quietly. Hence it was the vivid picture conjured up in my mind's eye of the old Siam of yesterday, in startling contrast to what I had just seen on the Siamese border, that brought to me an acute realization of the speed with which things were moving, the knowledge that I had been witnessing the end of an era. In a later chapter I shall show what happened when this era did end, and Siam made an effort to become a democracy. But failure had now followed the attempt for freedom that grew out of the New Siamese Nationalism. Even the new name of Thailand, translated as "freeland," was foisted upon the country by a military clique, as I shall also point out later.

In Malaya, of course, one could not expect much sensitivity to the passage of events in the great continent of which it formed the self-centered southeastern tip. In particular, Malaya had never concerned itself much with what happened over its northern border. The two countries had little in common. Looked at through Malayan eyes, Malaya was, as it had always been, a prosperous, well-ordered British colony. Siam was, also as it always had been, a rather barbarous Asiatic kingdom, and it was bad luck for a miner to have to live on one of those remote concessions over the border and have to put up with all that trouble with native officials. One occasionally read of strange goings-on in Bangkok in the columns of the *Straits Times*, but, so far as a Malayan resident was concerned, their kings and petty statesmen might rise and fall as they pleased. Malaysians were more concerned with the price of tin and rubber

which, after all, were the only things that brought them to this benighted corner of the globe.

My Malay syce had slowed down and now broke into my musings with the query, "*Mana pergi, tuan?*" We had reached the outskirts of the little Kedah township of Sungei Patani, and the thoughtful Malay's remark was evidently prompted by the fact that we should shortly be passing the club, of which all the army officers in the neighborhood had kindly been made honorary members.

"*Pergi club,*" I replied, as he doubtless expected. It had been a tiring afternoon, hot as usual, and I reflected that I had nothing to report at headquarters. The fixed official view was that the Siamese were friendly and would remain neutral. As for the Japanese, everyone knew that they were free to do just what they liked. The sun was sinking, and a stengah would be refreshing after the hot drive and my somewhat disturbing reflections on the way the world as I had known it was disintegrating.

A tennis four were striving to finish their game in the fast-fading light. A couple of bridge tables were hard at it, I noticed, as I passed the door of the bridge room, but the club verandah was almost deserted, for it was not a "club night." In the bar a trio of ruddy-faced planters in shirts and shorts were consuming what was probably not their first or even second round of stengahs. They were strangers to me, and undoubtedly did not know me from Adam. But they were friendly, hospitable fellows, and no sooner had they caught sight of a uniformed figure entering the bar than they cried out in unison, "Hey, come and 'ave a drink!"

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### TENTACLES OF EMPIRE

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DURING THE past two decades I have spent most of my time in India and the Far East. This is a bald statement that might produce a misleading impression, for indeed my experiences have not been confined within the restricted rut of the usual resident in the Orient. My education would have fitted me to take a perfectly normal place in the British colonial service. Fate and a predeliction for the unusual dictated that the only Eastern government I was to serve (until I joined the Indian Army in 1940) was to be that of Siam. Here, at a sufficiently impressionable age, I was placed for four years in a peculiarly cosmopolitan environment where the atmosphere was heavily charged with intrigue and the conflicting crosscurrents of European greed and Asiatic desire for freedom. While the white man's power was still the guiding force, the Asiatic was here nominally master in his own house. And one did not have to look very far below the surface to realize that the situation was pregnant with possibilities for the future.

Even during these initial four years the very long and frequent vacations allowed by an easy-going government



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to its foreign officials enabled me to travel extensively in the neighboring countries, where conditions on the surface seemed so much more stable, so finally settled in their submission to the white man's rule. Then, after my official connection with Siam was finished, though I was frequently to revisit that formerly pleasant land as a friend, the next fifteen years were to give me many opportunities to extend my acquaintance with the British, French, and Dutch possessions I had first visited on my vacations. Sometimes it was a few months' stay in a foreign colony on a semi-official mission or for a period of study, or it might be for so long as eighteen months at a time as in the case of Malaya.

This varied life was made possible by the fact that my work as an archaeological explorer could scarcely be restricted within arbitrary colonial boundaries. My funds, largely derived from free grants, gave me an independent status, very different from that of a government scientist, who is more or less restricted in field to a particular colony where, like other European residents, he spends a lifetime. The problems that engaged my attention led me from one colony or native state to another, and often back again. Naturally I was brought into contact with officials and residents both high and low. It would have been impossible not to have made comparisons, not to have noted all too frequently the limitations of a stereotyped outlook, a difficulty in making adaptations to changing world conditions.

This book deals with the past, though its implication is for the future. Whatever views one may hold of white imperialism, even in its later beneficent phase, there can be

no two minds on one thing—that the old conception of empire is doomed. That is a hard inescapable fact. The fall of Singapore, or rather all that it implied, brought that fact home to most of us. For in the words of Montesquieu: "When I hear that a nation has been defeated because of the loss of a single battle, I do not believe it; I look to the general causes that led it to lose that battle." Hence before we can plan for the future we must know what undermined the old order. If it was just Japanese aggression, at a time when the West was preoccupied elsewhere, then it could be re-established *in toto* after the war. But we shall see that that hypothesis does not bear close inspection.

So long as the white man's empire (I do not of course refer to the British Commonwealth of free nations) flourished, it was to me nothing but the background against which my generation happened to live. But now that it is joining the limbo of the past it is already the proper study of the historically minded. One may legitimately begin to search for and analyze those underlying causes that governed its decay. Even though one cannot hope for the perspective of a successor in a later century, this may in part be compensated for by the advantage of having known at first hand one's subject while it was still a living organism. One is not limited to dead documents.

At least there should be no delay in making a beginning, for, as I have said, the import of such a study is for the future, the near future. Once the ruthless Japanese hordes with their barbarous caricature of imperialism at its worst have been driven out, the world will have to face the task of reconstruction in Asia. The needs of international trade

## YEARS OF BLINDNESS

and access to raw materials are just two of the factors that ensure that what form that reconstruction takes must be the concern of every American, as well as of Europeans and Asiatics. Already the politicians, the idealists, and the economists are at work on the problem. But have they all the data in hand? Can the solution be a mere matter of statistics or of the abstract thought of the peace strategists? Surely the problem is too deeply rooted in past human relations to ignore their import and the lessons they may hold for the future. Facts and figures can give only a lifeless and imperfect picture. It seems to me that these must be supplemented by a more humanized study of the trends that brought about the disintegration of white rule during the present century and of the complementary growth of Asia's revolt. And such a study can be presented only, as is my intention here, through the medium of personal experience.

To the average European resident in southeastern Asia in the third decade of this century, nothing could have seemed to be more permanently crystallized than was this rich mosaic of colonial territories. What Siam was to everyone, so under more effective control was each colony to its respective owner. Perhaps nothing lent itself more to this impression of unchanging stability than did the host of little coasting and interisland steamers. Even more than the great ocean-going liners they led one to feel how com-

pletely these regions were subject to the European will. Each little vessel bore the stamp of the colonial power whose flag she flew. Each plied busily from one European-built port to another, exploiting raw materials and distributing European goods. To know something of the life and aspirations of the subject peoples one had to go inland, for those who were not masters in their own houses could scarcely control the adjacent waters. To appreciate what was the primary motive of the Europeans one need not stray far from the ports. The little ships made the motive quite plain and that is why I have called them the "tentacles of empire." In the old Norwegian tramp and the rusty Japanese freighter they even supplied a relic of the past and gave a hint of the future.

It was perhaps in Keppel Harbor, Singapore, that one might in normal times be sure of seeing the most varied collection of little steamers, representatives of almost all the great seafaring nations. Commonest were the British and the Dutch; most rare the occasional Frenchman from the Indo-China coast, on board which a fine attention to culinary matters compensated for a general atmosphere of repugnance at having to be in the East at all. I often wished that it were possible to go aboard one of them at random, without asking any questions, and wake up next morning at some new port or off some previously unvisited coral shore. But that was impossible, or almost. Every ship ran strictly to schedule and passages could be booked only through the shore agents, ensconced in their rather forbidding offices in Raffles Square. The only possible exceptions

were the Norwegian tramps, which put in an irregular though frequent appearance and were, as I have said, a link with old world conditions.

Norway had a vast carrying trade, which she pursued for the most part in ancient bottoms, never destined to return to their European port of registry. If one wanted to recapture something of the spirit of early merchant adventure, there would be no difficulty in going aboard to make your proposition to the weather-beaten old skipper, who was usually part owner as well. It was still better if one happened by chance to strike up an acquaintance with him in some wharf-side bar.

"Well, we've only one spare cabin," he'd say with a smile. "It's a bit primitive, but you say you don't mind that. One thing, the chow's all right (of its kind), my wife sees to that. When do we sail? Well, that just depends how soon I can fix up here for a cargo. And where to? Can't tell you that either. Hope it isn't up the China coast, anyway. We're a bit slow and those Bias Bay fellows [the pirates] know we're easy prey."

Such free and easy arrangements were the exception. And indeed they were certainly an anachronism at a time when the systematic exploitation of the dependent areas was at the very height of its profit-making efficiency. The agents for this or that company would show you their brochures and maps pointing out the unfailing regularity with which comfortable coasting steamers left for this or that destination. There were the Straits steamers which plied up and down the coasts of Malaya or to North Borneo, the Danish vessels monopolizing the trade of the

coasts of Siam, the huge fleet of the K.P.M. that threw out a vast network through the Dutch Indies, while the Bay of Bengal coasts were the preserve of the British India Company. Thus in shipping matters, whatever might be the policy of the moment in regard to trade, the colonies clung tenaciously to the monopoly system. Only at such free ports as Singapore and Hong Kong were the ships of all nations certain to be seen. And behind them all, even before the Singapore naval base was built, was a possibly unseen but implicitly trusted protecting arm, that of the British Navy.

At one time or another I have traveled on coasting steamers along the whole stretch of the Asiatic continent from Bombay to Shanghai, as well as several times through the Indies and among the Philippines, an undertaking which of necessity involves sailing under many flags. Since, except for an occasional allusion, I do not deal with the Philippines in this book, it may be as well to explain here that this is due to their peculiar relationship to the white man and his policies. Certainly American occupation of the islands, following the Spanish-American War of 1898, had its basis in the then prevailing imperialistic spirit, for the islands appeared most useful as a base for the China trade. But at the same time America pledged herself to the eventual granting of Philippine independence. This voluntary renunciation and the definite way in which the Filipinos were prepared for independence, which would have become effective in 1946, automatically excludes the Philippines from any discussion of the decay of white rule in Asia. No other power went further than to promise its

Asiatic dependencies "dominion status" at some indefinite future.

But there is another reason why the Philippines cannot be considered in conjunction with the other dependent areas. For nearly four centuries those islands have been under Spanish or American control, and the Filipinos are more thoroughly westernized than any other Asiatic people. Out of a population of seventeen million, 90 per cent are Christians, the exceptions being only the pagans of North Luzon and the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. Nor is it merely a matter of nominal conversion. Western civilization has penetrated deeply, partly owing to the fact that the Philippines, unlike the rest of southeastern Asia, had never been touched by Hinduism or Buddhism, so that there was no deep-seated resistance for the early missionaries to overcome.

I have visited all the chief islands. In Manila, when I was in Intramuros I felt that I was in Europe. Outside it, particularly when visiting the university, I was in America. A pleasant holiday among the pine-covered slopes of Baguio left an impression quite unlike that of any other Eastern hill station. The nearest parallel I know is to be found in the Great Smokies of western North Carolina.

Thus I came to regard the Philippines as outside the Orient. It is not mere race but culture and the things of the spirit that forge the enduring links of sympathy between one people and another. The Filipinos wanted independence but they realized that their ultimate future lay in linking themselves with, not against, democracy and the West.

## TENTACLES OF EMPIRE

To return to the little ships and their web of empire. On the whole the change that has appeared to me most noticeable during the last twenty years has been the rapid increase in the luxury of passenger accommodation of the ever growing fleets. Apart from a temporary setback during the depression, this trend was naturally most in evidence with the steamers serving the tin and rubber ports. The luxury-loving planters and merchants made increasingly high demands, since now they had the alternatives of plane and air-conditioned rail travel. They could spend their local leaves at a hill station rather than recuperate on a coasting voyage.

Each year in the twenties a new and ever more luxuriously appointed motor or oil-burning vessel of the Danish-operated Siam Steam Navigation Company's fleet left the slipways in Denmark. After an uneventful voyage East, during which she was mistaken for a luxury yacht at the various ports of call, she duly arrived in the river at Bangkok where, at a cocktail party given to all past patrons of the company, European residents admired the paneling, the excellently equipped bar, and the special rubber mattresses. And there and then, or so the company hoped, they decided to take their very next local leave on a voyage to Singapore and back, calling in on the way at all those delightful little coconut-fringed fishing villages. While the steamer was taking on board the ubiquitous dried fish and copra, an obliging captain would always make time for a swim in idyllic surroundings and reputedly shark-free waters. The white-painted Straits steamers like the *Kedah* and *Matang*, serving the Malayan ports, offered no less de-



gree of luxury with their wide sun decks, welcoming long chairs, and host of well-trained Chinese "boys," ideal for the "recuperating" planter.

The extent to which this web of empire held southeast-ern Asia within its grip was best seen in the 150 steamers of the Dutch K.P.M. line, the ramifications of which reached to the remotest islands of the Archipelago. They varied from such fine express steamers as the *Plancius* and *Op ten Norte*, which made the journey from Singapore to Batavia in record time and at extremely high fares, to the lowly freighters that connected Java with New Guinea, the Spice Islands, or Macassar. All bore the hallmark of commercial efficiency. All were intent upon bringing Dutch goods to the native markets and draining away the oil, tin, and rubber to the main Java ports. There they were expeditiously loaded into the holds of the great home-going liners or tankers.

The captains and officers of the K.P.M. steamers were paid highly even by comparison with the employees of other far eastern companies, and indeed the captain of a small K.P.M. or Straits coaster was often wealthy by comparison with the master of a giant Cunarder. That comparative wealth he would say he deserved, for had he not spent a lifetime in the tropics, with a home leave at best every five years? And despite the growing luxury, which was for his passengers anyway, the ship's captain lived much closer to nature and the great imponderable primeval forces that still held sway near to the surface in the Orient than a casual voyager, impressed only with the smooth regularity of shipboard life, might imagine.

## TENTACLES OF EMPIRE

Judging by the stories they have to tell, ships' officers have ever to be on the lookout for the unexpected, and on one occasion I was vividly reminded of the proximity of the jungle law to even the best-ordered little interisland merchantmen. We were lying one evening off the Borneo port of Pontianak. As we were already loaded I was expecting the captain on the bridge to up anchor and ring the telegraph at any moment. Casually I was surveying with idle interest the motley collection of deck passengers just settling down on the forward well deck. Suddenly there was a cry and a scuffle. A kris flashed aloft and flashed again. Then a Bajau fisherman was pushing his way to the rail and in a moment he was in the water. If he had hoped to make the shore he was unlucky. A shark darted at him and the water was stained crimson. Down on the well deck six Chinese passengers were being laid out, each with a deep stab wound. The chief engineer, for there was no doctor, hurried to the scene with a large jar of iodine, the invaluable stand-by of the European when placed in such a predicament. The captain signaled vigorously to the port authorities for help.

What the cause of the tragedy had been I never learned. Perhaps the Bajau had a grudge against some Chinese moneylender and had come on board seeking revenge. Not finding the right man, without further deliberation he had run amok as Malays do. It was just a glimpse of the naked heart of Asia, beating strong as ever beneath the heavy overlying hand of Western control and ready to burst forth if given the slightest opportunity and assert itself in ways we do not understand.

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European sailors in the East lived in too close contact with the elements, too, for the softening effects commonly resulting from settled life in the tropics to have undermined their traditional sturdiness. After all, typhoons have still to be reckoned with on the China coast every bit as much as they had to be when Conrad made them famous. That they are no respecters of modern shipping is obvious to anyone who has seen the precautions taken at Repulse Bay, Hong Kong, when the typhoon signal is up. Nor, when faced by the full fury of a breaking monsoon, did the navigation of a super luxury interisland boat call for any less skill or initiative than did the rustiest old freighter. It merely meant that there was more expensive glassware to be broken in the saloon. In any case, even the smartest coaster relapsed to the status of freighter during the six months of the off season when passengers were rare.

I have seen for myself something of conditions aboard small steamers under the foul weather conditions of the monsoon, and have spent a good many youthful hours listening in spellbound enjoyment to the yarns of Eastern sea captains. So I can well imagine that when the full tale is told of their heroism in the dark hour of Singapore's unexpected fall, it may stand comparison with any other chapter of human bravery that war can produce. Long before Pearl Harbor, the numbers of little far eastern ships had been thinned by calls to the Red Sea and the Mediterranean; and in particular I recall with what a sense of personal loss I heard of the fate in those waters of a little old coaster on which I had voyaged more than once through

the beautiful Mergui Archipelago. Such steamers as these, both British and Dutch, of a tonnage varying from five hundred to two thousand, must have borne the stress of the evacuation of women and children from Singapore and Java. Over and over again many of them must have returned with unfaltering bravery, dodging the merciless attacks of the dive bombers. But all too many were lost, all too many of their gallant officers perished during those last terrible days before the Japanese pincers closed on the fallen domain of the white man in southeastern Asia.

Unexpected indeed must this final catastrophe have been to the European sea captains. However alert they may have been to the dangers that they knew, symbols as they were of the established order, it would scarcely have been for them to note the signs of trouble brewing ashore, the jealous glances cast by Japanese spies and the growth of nationalism in the cities. The experience of an old British India captain illustrates the latter point.

The British India line's ships, I should say, naturally reflect the snobbish and Victorian conditions that linger in British India. Up-to-date appointments are of secondary consideration as compared with the importance of unfailingly dressing for dinner in the first class. However appropriate such a convention might seem on the lordly P. & O., it becomes somewhat ridiculous on a small coaster in tropical waters. And what a small first class it is. That, of course, is because both British exclusiveness and the Indian caste system have to be accommodated. So there is also a second-class "*a*" and "*b*," and an intermediate-class

"a" and "b," and a third-class "a" and "b," each with its small allowance of carefully fenced deck space.

At the time of the incident I am about to relate, our old-fashioned captain, whose name I will not divulge, was on the Calcutta-Rangoon run, though when he told the story to me, as a direct outcome of the incident he found himself steaming down the Coromandel Coast. The captain, on the occasion of which he told me, was taking with him to Rangoon no less distinguished a personage than Mohandas Gandhi, traveling third class as was his usual custom. But alas, the captain, whose ideas had not advanced with the times, and who was not very much in touch with politics, was not particularly appreciative of the honor conferred upon him. Still less was this the case when he found that Gandhi had seated himself to await the sailing of the ship, with a large group of enthusiastic followers come to bid him good-by, on the sacred first-class deck. Not only was it a most unheard of thing for such people to invade the sahibs' preserves, but so many were Gandhi's followers and so enthusiastic were they that they became a positive hindrance to the loading of the mails and the baggage, and the chances of the ship's catching the Hooghly tide.

"So I just sent word down from the bridge to turn them all off, put Gandhi into the third class where he belonged, and his followers ashore. Punctuality meant more to me than all them Congress blokes."

But the good captain had failed to reckon with the changing times. There was no saving him from the scapegoat's role. Before long he duly received a peremptory

order from the company to apologize. He refused to do so and as a mark of official displeasure was promptly transferred to the run on which I met him, there to nurse his sense of injured innocence.

But such isolated episodes could scarcely shake the general impression of the stability of white rule and efficient exploitation. Yet even in the early twenties there was one small cloud on the horizon that could hardly escape the notice of the worthy mariners, although its fateful import might mean little more to them than to the most complacent of landlubbers. That was the rusty Japanese freighter with its handmaid, the fishing trawler. The latter sought concessions where it could get them and thus enabled its crew to spy out shallow waters beyond the reach of the larger vessel.

The Japanese freighters were the means of opening the way to the wedge of commercial penetration that was to pave the way for conquest. They did not compete directly with the European coasting steamers. They were allowed access only to the chief international and free ports. But during the depression, with their big sisters, the N.Y.K. liners, their cheap rates were such that they could undercut the Europeans in much of the world carrying trade. Then by means of threatening and wheedling they increased, as the time to strike drew near, their shipments of oil and war material from the Dutch Indies, drained as much as they could from the Malayan rubber estates and iron mines they had been allowed to acquire. Yes, the Japanese freighter was the vanguard of Japanese empire.

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It is said that there is nothing new under the sun. That applies in essence to the coming in our own time of the Japanese merchantmen. It was from another little boat, this time the customs cruiser *Elias bin Ahmed* put at my disposal by the Malayan government, that I made this discovery in 1938. My object was simply to explore an old trading settlement that lay hidden in the mangrove swamps off the Perak coast. It was impossible to reach the spot except by water, but the voyage involved only a few hours' steaming from Port Weld through the calm waters of the Straits of Malacca. The cruiser was well equipped for such work. There were a saloon forward, a galley, and ample crew quarters astern where the Malay excavators we took with us could be accommodated during the four-day trips that the limited supply of fresh water allowed. The captain was an old and trusted Malay who lived on the bridge and spent a good deal of his time reciting the Koran when not busy navigating. I used to spend the day ashore, recovering the lost secrets of the swamp. By night I rejoined the craft, when we would steam half a mile off shore to escape the attentions of the vicious mosquitoes and sandflies.

What did I find at Kuala Selinsing that could have any possible bearing on the trend of present-day events that were so soon to engulf all southeastern Asia? At first I found it no small task even to make my way through these pathless swamps. Clambering over the aerial roots of the mangroves, the only alternative to sinking waist deep in black mud and salt water, is by no means easy to the unaccustomed European. I was glad indeed of a helping hand

from my Borneo Dyak, one of those splendid jungle men I had brought with me and who flitted lightly from root to root like a naked brown fairy.

The actual old settlement was comparative terra firma. The inhabitants, who had been Proto-Malays, probably deserted the place about the twelfth century A.D. after a residence of a thousand years or more. They had lived in the ordinary stilted attap-thatched wooden houses, as their descendants elsewhere still do. Beneath their houses they had buried their dead in dugout canoes; and they had flung their rubbish through their house floors for so many centuries that in time it had built up this comparatively firm island of deposits that I had come to excavate. And among this rubbish there were thousands of beads.

About 6 per cent of the beads were very ancient eye beads that had come from Europe. They had been made in the eastern Mediterranean, probably in Crete or Cyprus, as long ago as the second century A.D., and may have been brought in Roman or Phoenician trading galleys. There is nothing very remarkable about that, for we know from the Chinese annals that in A.D. 120 a company of Greek or Roman comedians traveled from Burma to China, and they would certainly have been preceded by traders. But what of the remaining 94 per cent of the beads? They were smaller and brighter, made of glass of many colors and much more likely to have appealed to simple natives. Evidently they were made by people who knew better than did the Romans the mind and the taste of Asiatics. And we now know that they were first made about the third century A.D. in Japan.



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Whether the Japanese themselves brought these beads we cannot say. All we know is that as a commercial proposition the beads were remarkably successful. They swept right through the Indies, through South India, Madagascar, and on to Rhodesia where they are common in the famous ruins of Zimbabwe. Thus they closely foreshadowed Japanese ambitions of a later day. What other goods, such as silks, accompanied the beads and what other European goods they displaced, we do not know, for naturally in a damp tropical climate all traces of such things perish. Nor do we know whether the Japanese even then, before lapsing into centuries of isolationism, dreamed of world conquest. If they did, then what was it that balked the Sun Goddess of her prey? We cannot tell for certain, but perhaps it was because China and India at that time were great and free, and because a certain far-seeing Hindu prince, of whom more in a later chapter, knew the value of controlling the land as well as the sea and did not stake his all on naval strength.

But if the warning of the modern Japanese freighters with their increasing commercial penetration had meant little to the far eastern colonists and their home governments, with their unquestioning faith in Singapore and the unchangeability of the map as they knew it, what would they have thought of anything so ludicrous as the warning of the beads? Yet scarcely had my report called attention to their implication than the Japanese were on the threshold. There they were, picking their way through the Kuala Selinsing swamps as lightly as monkeys, almost as lightly as my fairy-like Dyak, and far more effec-

tively than our all too few defenders, constantly outflanked and unprepared for such tactics. Late, but evidently not too late, the Japanese had come, in the wake of their bright little beads, to fulfill the mission of the Sun Goddess, as they pressed on to Singapore. On to Singapore they pressed, to take the great naval base in the rear, and with it the main bulwark of that great international fleet of busy little ships that had seemed to be not a mere episode in the endless kaleidoscope of history, but there for all time, to hold the East subservient to the West.

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#### PLANTER OR MINER?

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A FEW YEARS ago I walked into the Majestic Hotel at Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the Federated Malay States, and asked for a room for the night. Noticing the slightly hesitant manner with which, pen in hand, I paused before entering my occupation in the register, the Chinese desk clerk sought to jog my Malayan mental processes with the helpful suggestion "Planter or miner?" If the choice was to be so limited, I reflected, then the latter alternative would surely be the most appropriate, for the archaeologist and the miner have at least in common the overwhelming desire to delve beneath the surface of the earth.

I mention the "planter or miner?" incident because it does sum up rather graphically the limitations of society in Malaya. Of course, there were the civil servants, but they were relatively few in number and a heaven-born class apart; and in the towns there were the commercial communities, also with a slightly superior manner, on the assumption that the shipping of the products of those who planted and delved and the purveying to them of whisky and other necessary commodities entitled the businessmen

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to a more exalted status in the materialistic little world that was Malaya. Nevertheless, Malaya was primarily a country of planters and miners. They had been the means of opening up the Peninsula, turning its wild jungles into orderly rows of latex-bearing trees, reclaiming the tin from rich alluvium brought down by the foaming mountain torrents. They were the instruments by which vast British capital had been brought to bear fruit in this distant tropic land. This fruit included some two or three hundred millions of American dollar balance annually, for all the world knows to what extent the United States depended on Malaya for her tin and rubber.

The planters and miners then were the last great link in the chain which brought the dividends to many thousands of British shareholders comfortably ensconced in the country houses and the suburban villas of England. Malaya meant little to them. They took it for granted as part of the Empire and did not visualize the possibility of losing it. They did not trouble themselves about the living conditions out there. Such matters were delegated to certain frock-coated gentlemen, the directors, who very occasionally donned white suits and went for short visits to Malaya at the best times of year, just to see that all was well. It was enough for them at every annual general meeting to respond dutifully to the call for a "vote of thanks to our staff in the Far East."

That the life of the men out East was one of fearful boredom and drudgery did not occur to the people of England. It came as a shock after the fall of Singapore to hear the suggestion that years spent in combating this monotonous

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existence had to some extent undermined the colonial's ability to resist an invasion. Shortsightedly they forgot that these planters and miners had been sent to Malaya for the very definite purpose of exploiting its natural wealth and nothing more. Not having been picked from the more highly educated strata of society to begin with, it was too much to expect them to cope altogether with that deterioration in mental and physical vigor that all too readily sets in if life in the tropics be accompanied by ease.

During the protracted archaeological survey of Malaya that I carried out for the government a few years ago, I wandered over many rubber estates and got to know many planters, who were always willing to give me the assistance I required as soon as I had succeeded in getting them to understand the unusual and profitless nature of my quest. But the estate I knew best and the one where I felt most at home lay in North Malaya not far from the Kedah border and only some forty miles by road from Penang. The near-by remains of an extensive ancient settlement, with many mounds to excavate, had kept me in the neighborhood for seven or eight months. It was not a large estate, but it was an old one, as rubber plantations go, and it had a delightfully picturesque situation, sheltered as it was beneath the majestic bulk of that unfailingly beautiful jungle-clad, massive Kedah Peak. By a curious coincidence it was in the empty bungalow of a former assistant on this estate that I found myself quartered when I came back to Malaya with the Indian Army in 1941.

The manager, a taciturn man at best, was then troubled over unprecedented labor disturbances that had recently

made their appearance on other estates and which he feared might come his way. That simply staggering occurrence when a crowd of Tamil coolies had blockaded an estate manager in his bungalow and had on pain of death demanded higher wages was something of which he had never heard the like in all his twenty-five years in Malaya. "All due to that Nehru coming over here and making them dissatisfied," was the only explanation he could offer. But I suppose it was intuition of a more all-embracing tragedy to come that prompted me one afternoon not long before the end to have a chat on old times with the more communicative elderly Chinese clerk. He had watched the growth of the estate since it was planted in 1910, just after Kedah was taken over from the Siamese.

"Who was the first manager?" I inquired.

"That was Mr. Gardner, sir; it was very sad. We found him dead one morning here in the office. He shot himself."

"Really? Whatever made him do that?"

"It was just that morning, sir, that he had received a harsh letter from the directors. He must have felt bad about it, after all he had done in opening up the estate."

"Dear me, I suppose you've seen a lot of changes since then," I said, changing the subject.

"Indeed I have," he said with a grin. "In those days there were no motor roads, though you could get a carriage through to the estate by cart track in dryish weather. But normally the way to Penang was by boat, and we shipped all the rubber that way too. We had half a dozen European assistants on the estate, but there was no club at Sungei

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Patani and even the manager thought twice before going into Penang for an occasional week end. Anyway, in those days, what with the continuous jungle clearing and new planting, there was little enough time for pleasure."

"At any rate you had no trouble with labor in those days, did you?"

"Well, not exactly trouble, no sir; only I've twice seen cholera carry off half the labor force, in the early days before we got this good water supply from the mountain."

"Well, what are you going to do if the Japanese come?"

"They won't dare come, sir; Mr. Williams [the present manager] says they'd never dare. Anyhow, whatever happens I shall stay. My house and family are here and have I not got an acre of rubber of my own? I saw the white masters come to open up this land, and, if go they must, I will watch them go." And then he added rather wistfully, "Where could I go? We local-born Chinese belong to this country."

In the early days, as the old Chinese clerk had rightly reminded me, there was planting to be done. Since then the Malayan planter had seldom planted, for it was only quite recently that the unwelcome discovery was made that the rubber tree does not live forever and would gradually have to be replaced by new stock. Estates, too, had come more and more to run themselves, and reliance was increasingly placed on trustworthy and experienced Chinese and Tamil conductors. The climate had been robbed of most of its terrors; there was less necessity to keep fit; good roads and easily procurable automobiles had brought the towns within easy reach. The brides from Europe had

meanwhile taken possession of social life, and there was more interest in dancing at the many excellent clubs and in the hotels in the cities than there was in the once popular shooting and hunting in the now receding jungles. When war came, the young planter who was eager to find an outlet for his patriotism in the local volunteer force found the hard training put a severe and unexpected strain on his unaccustomed muscles. The fact was that a new and softer generation wearing shorts and disdaining hats had come to replace the lean hard young men in khaki trousers and double terrai who had opened up the country.

In the course of frequent visits to Malaya over a long period I had seen a good many young planters grow up to maturity, witnessed their ups and downs in slump and boom, and noted the disappearance of familiar faces with the passage of years. To generalize on the type would not be difficult, for I suppose it would be hard to find anywhere in the world a duller set of men or a more dreary daily grind than formed their lot. "The highest paid unskilled laborers in the world," as they were described by a former Secretary of State for the colonies, comes nearer to the mark than does the colorful dramatization of Somerset Maugham.

The young planter comes out to Malaya without training in forestry and he picks up the required knowledge in the course of his work as an assistant. He has probably got the job through knowing someone in the country, for, except in boom times when the veriest beachcomber stands a chance of temporary employment, managers prefer a trustworthy young man, possibly a brother of some older



assistant. He is seldom of the old-school-tie brand, for in Malaya there are none of those restrictions that make Ceylon tea planting practically a closed profession. Indeed, in Ceylon there are only occasional opportunities for well-recommended representatives of England's gilded youth, who have to serve a long time as "creepers" or apprentices at considerable expense before being admitted permanently into the fold.

With a hundred dollars (U.S.) a month, two native servants, and a picturesque timber bungalow, the young planter feels pretty well off; and so he probably is in comparison with his schoolfellows who have remained at home to make their way as clerks. There is plenty to keep him occupied and interested while he is learning the work. He even enjoys getting up at 5 A.M. to watch the Tamil conductor calling the roll before the tapping coolies set forth on their rounds. He walks miles over the estate every morning, and in the afternoon he finds his initiation into office routine by no means uninteresting. He can seldom afford a visit to Penang or Kuala Lumpur—perhaps not once in six months if the estate is a remote one—but he can get to the club for a game of tennis before "club nights" and even more often if he has been able to buy an old motor cycle.

Usually he just relaxes after a tiring day's work in a long chair on the verandah of his bungalow, while he leisurely sips the one or two stengahs that he has heard are good for him in this trying climate. Possibly as he reclines there he is not oblivious to the very real beauty of the tropic scene in that fleeting half-hour when a gorgeous sunset

casts reflections on the many-hued mountains, a cool breeze stirring among the palms on the edge of the lawn fans the fevered brow, and a play of light and shade among the first ranks of rubber trees invests them with a fairy-like air of romance.

Strangely enough, even by the harsh noonday light it is these very trees growing in their ordered rows that impress the young planter with a sense that something of the romantic attaches to his job. But perhaps most of all he is imbued with a feeling of new-found importance in the world as the agile Tamil coolies quietly run to do his bidding in response to the few phrases of their language that he has managed to master by dint of frequently consulting a much-thumbed "Planters Handbook of Elementary Tamil."

So the young colonial exults over what he conceives to be the great adventure of "pioneering" in Malaya. He does not know that his sensations of glowing satisfaction are purely subjective, the subconscious promptings of his own youth reacting to a strange environment. His ego is responding to the call of youth inherent in the human race but too often stifled by the stereotyped and artificial life of our cities. But in his case this primitive urge, though he does not realize it, is being falsely stimulated. The young planter does not know that here is no romance and no adventure. He has embarked on a life of deadly monotony, a galley slave of Rubber.

Providentially, perhaps, the insidious oncoming of "Singapore mind" dulls his consciousness of the transition from romance to disillusion. He thinks less actively

now—the trouble isn't worth while in this infernal climate. His reading is confined to glancing through the local newspaper and the stale English magazines at the club. He writes fewer letters and drinks a little more, though he would resent the suggestion that the country is getting him down. Of course it isn't, and as the years slip away, more quickly than he dared to expect (when one looks back on their emptiness), he is filled with the new excitement of seeing the home folks again. Old scenes flood his memory as he impatiently looks forward to the day when he is due to mount the gangplank of a P. & O. at Singapore.

Back again in England there is bitter disillusion indeed. His relatives are too full of their own affairs to show much sympathy with colonial life which, in any case, he finds it all too difficult to describe. His old friends are even less responsive; though it may well be that his attentions are reciprocated by some local girl who is already well read on Malaya as delineated by the vivid pen of Somerset Maugham. Failing that consolation, it is by no means unusual for a young planter to pack up and take a boat back to Malaya a month earlier than he need. He is now frankly bored, both with the home life into which he no longer fits and with the prospect of returning to the estate. During the voyage he takes less interest in the game competitions than he did on his first voyage out East. But he takes an increased interest in the bar and is inclined to rebuff first voyagers whose eager questionings about life in Malaya he finds a bit troublesome.

The estate manager is fat and approaching middle age, though often boyish in manner and rubicund in counte-

nance. Eighteen years of conscientious boredom have brought him the coveted appointment. He knows every one of the thousands of trees on the estate and loathes the sight of them all. He does not walk so far now or get up so early, though he is plagued with the anguishing business of writing reports at all too frequent intervals. What a blessing, though, is the telephone and the existence of the firm's agents in Penang or Singapore to whom he can always turn when in doubt as to the making of a decision. Of course, he is the man on the spot; he is expected to deal with day-to-day problems and keep a tight control over the labor force. In short, he has definite responsibilities and that is why he is paid a thousand dollars a month.

Unfortunately for him, this generous income is not going to continue forever. At fifty-five the planter must retire, and, save in the very few instances when managers are invited to join boards of directors in England, his life in retirement is going to depend on what he has managed to save in some fifteen years of managership in the East. Another shadow always lurking in the background of the planter's life is the price of rubber. In the great depression whole estates were closed down and reclaimed by the jungle. Penniless young planters were placed in camps in Penang awaiting shipment back to England as distressed British subjects. Once there they turned their hands to anything, some becoming taxi drivers, others peddling vacuum cleaners. A few borrowed money from relatives to try and make a new start in Africa. Even managers had to accept assistants' pay in order to be kept on. But by 1935 all this was forgotten. Prices were rising, and the Malayan

climate does not encourage one to worry about intangible dangers of the future beyond one's control. Sufficient for the day . . .

It was like the twenties, almost; there was a job for everyone who had the slightest experience in rubber. Even the down-and-out beachcombers of the Singapore bars were back in clean suits, back on the estates striving to make amends, and—back in the clubs!

The manager is, of course, a great man at his local club, especially if he gives a silver cup for the junior planters' tennis competition. But unless he is condemned to a very remote estate he takes more radical means to defeat boredom. He gets away every week end to Kuala Lumpur, Penang, or Singapore, whichever is the nearest. On Saturdays you could see the planters and their wives by the dozens at that wonderful old institution the Spotted Dog, as the famed Selangor Club was affectionately known. After watching a football game on the spacious *padang* the planters were wont with one accord to gather beneath the fans around the innumerable tables in the bars and lounges. And then in response to the oft repeated cries of "Boy!" soft-footed Chinese servants brought round after round of stengahs and huge platters loaded with *makan kechil*, those temptingly flavored hors d'oeuvres calculated to prevent the liquor from taking effect too quickly.

Meanwhile conversation certainly didn't flag, at least in quantity, although neither in clubs, hotels, nor in bungalow entertaining have the sexes many topics in common. Indeed, it was usually at tables apart or in the men's bar at the Dog that the planters clustered together to discuss the

price of rubber and the effects of restriction. At least, this is how they would begin, but as time wore on and they grew more befuddled such painfully serious subjects were happily laid aside for the pleasant relaxation of ribald jokes and senseless babbling. Meanwhile, with little less reliance on tobacco and alcoholic stimulants, the *mems* are chatting together out of earshot, and they have plenty to say with such endless topics as children, servants, bungalows, and now and then a little scandal.

Staggering into cars in time to arrive at the Hotel Majestic or in the bungalows of friends for dinner at 9:30 or 10 P.M., the planters and their families were naturally not always in a condition to do justice to the meal. All that succulent *makan kechil* had spoiled their appetites, shall we say? But on Sunday morning everyone was bright again, for was that not a most enjoyable part of the week end away from rubber? Golf for the younger and hardier ones, unless prevented by a headache, sitting round the club bathing pool for the rest, at least from 11 A.M. onwards. The strains of an orchestra, that would not be considered first class elsewhere than in Malaya, now limited the necessity for conversation, at least until the gin *pahits* had brightened one up. Then came the grand finale, the huge curry tiffin, washed down by lashings of beer, after which there was really nothing to do but tumble into cars and be driven back to the old estates.

Not an unpleasant way of making life out East a little more bearable, one might say. Nevertheless, not quite up to pre-depression standards, so I was told not long ago by the old Armenian proprietor of Penang's E. & O. Hotel.

## YEARS OF BLINDNESS

"In the early twenties it was champagne instead of all this beer, gin, and whisky," he lamented, "and not merely on Saturdays, but almost every night I had every table in the dining room booked up with parties from Kedah. Every now and again, just to encourage 'em, I'd make it 'Champagne on the house all round' if a planter could walk across the dance floor balancing a bottle on his head."

If it has not been difficult to picture the typical Malayan planter, it would be far from easy to recall having met more than a single "character" among this commonplace set. Nor do I record the existence of Watkins as an edifying story, but simply because it is an example of one of the convenient uses to which our colonies could on occasion be put by those at home. Watkins, in fact, was a remittance man, a scion of a good family and blessed with an excellent education, though to neither was he evidently considered a credit. So he was sent off as a ne'er-do-well to Malaya, to make a show of managing one of several estates near Kuala Lumpur in which his family had controlling interests. Never sober, Watkins was not welcome in the very respectable society of the Spotted Dog or indeed of any other Malayan club. The result was that Malaya having become rather too small for him, he let his estate go to wrack and ruin.

To while away his time Watkins spent the greater part of his life on "rest cures," a passenger on one or another of those delightful little coasting vessels that plied between Singapore and Bangkok. It was many years ago on one of these trips that I first had the pleasure of meeting him. He used to play cards quite reasonably until the liquor that

was ever at his elbow began to take effect; and he could talk entertainingly on subjects quite beyond the ken of the ordinary planter. But if the Chinese steward was so careless as to close the bar at night without placing a bottle of gin beside his bed he would wake up during the small hours and create pandemonium. This was all the more annoying to the rest of us, since on that steaming coast passengers all slept on camp beds on deck.

Twice Watkins tried to get home to England. The first time he got as far as Marseilles where he was caught and sent back by an emissary of his family. Later he thought of outwitting his relatives by going via the Pacific. Unfortunately they got wind of his intentions, and although he reached New York he was stopped by one of Pinkerton's men just as, a few minutes before midnight, he was staggering up the gangplank of the *Aquitania*.

That last attempt broke Watkins' heart. He abandoned all pretense at managing his estate and sailed aimlessly up and down the coast. In fact, a common greeting among sea captains on this coast was, "You got Watkins this voyage?" At the end of each northward trip he always had a few days on his hands which he spent in Bangkok at a little waterfront tavern kept by an Italian, with whom strangely enough he had in common the hobby of stamp collecting.

It was from this shabby inn that they finally carried him off to the nursing home one evening with delirium tremens. They placed him in one of those special rooms with grilled doors reserved for patients suffering from this affliction whom no nurse dare approach. Such treatment seemed to annoy poor Watkins. He registered his displeas-



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ure by flinging through the open window all the furniture that his failing strength would allow him to lift. But the effort was too much for him, and he collapsed. The consul scorned to attend the funeral of this lonely Briton in a far foreign land. The customary Union Jack was forgotten. The only mourner was the little Italian innkeeper; and he had every reason to pay his last respects to Watkins, for had he not just gone very carefully through his stamp collection?

Strangely enough, it was on the same voyage up the Malayan coast when I had first met Watkins that I had my introduction to a member of the tin-mining profession. We had just made a stop of an hour or two at a tiny port, the siren had sounded, the propellers were turning, and the probability was that the Chinese steward would at any moment sound the gong for dinner. Going to my cabin to wash, what was my astonishment to find lying on my clean white bed, in a drunken stupor from which there was no awakening him, a dirty-looking, unshaven individual clad in soiled khaki shirt and trousers. Dumped on the floor beside him was a considerable wooden box, which I learned afterwards contained his drilling equipment. A single old gasoline can fitted with a lid contained his kit. That was an Australian miner. He was drunk at the moment, it is true, but he had had to fill in time somehow waiting for the steamer. And a rough diamond at best we found him after he had joined our somewhat variegated society on board.

Nevertheless, he was a pioneer, an adventurer, the type of man who was becoming all too rare in Malaya.

Nowadays every American knows that one of the chief sources of his tin was the ore-bearing ranges that run right through the Burmese, Siamese, and Malayan parts of the Malay Peninsula and continue on into Sumatra and some of the neighboring small islands. Wolfram and a little gold are also found in these districts. Winning all this material wealth is no new profession. Unlike rubber planting, which has merely been imitated by Japanese and Chinese settlers and the natives in quite recent years, tin mining has always been carried on in these countries by Asiatics. All over the Peninsula there are the remains of old shaft workings in which the curious may find strange primitive tools; and at one place in Burma the remarkable discovery of a number of manacled human skeletons was made in one shaft. These remains of some ancient chain gang might serve as an object lesson to the complaining mining coolie of today that there was a time when labor conditions really were unpleasant.

Who these ancient miners were is still uncertain. The Arabs brought their wares to exchange for tin, which was much in demand at the courts of the caliphs of Bagdad, and no one really knows where King Solomon's mines were located. However this may be, the probability is that in those days, as in these, the workers in the mines were Chinese. Nowadays the Chinese still individually wash for tin and gold in the upper reaches of the mountain streams; while most of the comparatively inexpensive open casting, by which tin is washed out of the surface alluvium in the

lower valleys, is carried on by Chinese companies. But virtually all the large-scale mining, which employs costly dredges as a means of getting at the lower-level alluvial deposits, inaccessible by any other means, was in the hands of large British, Australian, and American corporations which alone had the necessary capital.

Stories of the small beginnings from which sprang these famous corporations have a good deal of the flavor of real romance. There was the British sea captain half a century ago who, weighing anchor preparatory to sailing out of Tongkah harbor on the Siamese west coast, noticed the unusual color of the mud brought up by the anchor. On this coast, where tin instead of rubber is the main subject of conversation, and as all his passengers were mining men, not unnaturally the captain had picked up a little knowledge of ores. His suspicions were aroused, so on his next visit to that as yet undeveloped little fishing village, the captain hung a bucket over the side and what he saw made his heart leap with excitement. That his sample was rich alluvial tin was presently confirmed by an expert mining analyst. Setting out posthaste to London, Captain Miles, for that was his name, succeeded in raising the capital required for founding and equipping the Tongkah Harbor Tin Dredging Company. Luckily for him the whole floor of the harbor to a great depth proved to consist of rich tin-bearing alluvium. The future of the firm was assured and only quite recently old Captain Miles died in comfort at the age of ninety, his sons and grandchildren still actively engaged in the tin business until that dread day in December, 1941.

## PLANTER OR MINER?

Probably the era of individual enterprise in the mining field is not yet finally at an end in this region. There is still much land under jungle where anything might be found. I remember when I was voyaging down the Lower Burma coast from Moulmein to Penang a few years ago a young Englishman, the son of a well-known Singapore business-man, came on board at the little mining town of Tavoy. Though weak with malaria, contracted in the remote jungle-clad hills of Lower Burma where he could get no proper treatment, his yellowed face flushed with excitement as he showed me with shaking hands his undoubted specimens of gold-bearing quartz. He had secured a concession from the Burma government and was now on his way back to Singapore to float a company.

Not all mining prospectors are so fortunate and hence most of them have less personal interest in those finds that they do make. It pays them better to be in the regular employ of one of the great mining firms. But whether on their own or working for a firm, the mining prospector has a hard life and is made of tougher fiber than the planter. Setting off for weeks at a time with perhaps one servant and very little food, he picks up as he goes what he can in the way of chickens and rice. But his quest takes him far from the beaten tracks and even from paths known only to the natives. He must put up with bloodsucking leeches and risk the ever present danger of wild animals. Malaria is a constant menace and in the rainy weather he has no protection beyond what is afforded by a single sheet of canvas. In this way and under such conditions he goes distances and reaches places for which a scientific explorer would

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demand an elaborate expedition. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that occasionally an elderly prospector, grown too feeble for the task, sometimes disappears and is never heard of again.

The scene of operations of the big mining companies, where the great dredges worked ceaselessly up and down the ponds of their own making, was often located in the most out-of-the-way places in Burma, Malaya, and southern Siam, wherever the rivers had deposited the much prized alluvium. Even where the mine was near such a center as Kuala Lumpur or Ipoh there was less room for the luxurious and settled life that had grown up around rubber. No one knew how soon the site would be exhausted, and then dredges and equipment had to be dismantled and shipped or railed off to some new and possibly remote concession where the firm's prospectors and engineers had established the existence of a new deposit.

When war broke out in 1939 it found the planters and miners were ready—ready to step up their output to 100 per cent now that all restrictions were to be removed. That was what they understood would be required of them, just as it was in the last war. If drink flowed a little more freely, that was only to be expected in a boom. They gladly gave up spare time to volunteering and gave most generously to the British war effort. They were not supposed to be strategists, and if there was complacency in Malaya the blame for that has probably to be allocated nearer home.

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### THE PASSING OF THE PRIMITIVE

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THE THREAT of ill health and often an enforced isolation from his own kind were formerly considered inseparable from life in the tropics. In the old days the white man tolerated this because he could get rich quickly and return home in affluence while still comparatively young. Since the turn of the century, as though to balance the individual's reduced chance of making a fortune, living conditions have been much improved. Thus both the white man and the white woman have been able to contemplate a healthier and more settled stay in the East. This welcome change has been brought about primarily by the betterment of sanitation and communications, which governments realized was necessary if exploitation of raw material sources and native markets was to be developed to the full. What they were slower to appreciate was that a less satisfactory side of the picture would make its appearance in due course, the effect of which would hasten the decay of imperialism. After calling attention in the first part of this chapter to the vastness of the improvement in colonial living conditions, I shall show the manner in

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which this has softened the once rigorous pioneer life. And while I speak here mainly of life in the British Asiatic dependencies, it goes without saying that a very similar process has been at work throughout the white man's Orient.

Naturally not every government has been equally quick or able to take advantage to the full of the rapid advances made by medical science in the twentieth century. As with the development of communications, this depends in a colony on the capital available and the returns to be expected. But in most European colonies great strides have been made, and before my time both Malaya and the Dutch Indies had been rendered comparatively healthy. Naturally, to banish disease from the crowded native quarters of Indian cities, before the people have been educated up to a desire to cooperate, is an entirely different proposition. But the days are long past when European wives danced in the hill stations not knowing whether the telegraph would inform them in the morning that they had become widows overnight.

To recapture something of the spirit of conditions that were once all too widespread I have to look back to Siam as I knew it in my first years in the East. Then cholera and plague epidemics still struck the capital with fury; and the new water supply and vaccines had only just begun to offer those who made use of them a hope of immunity.

The last really serious cholera epidemic I remember in Bangkok came in the hot season of 1925. It had not been expected and it arrived entirely without warning. It came on a ship from Swatow, one of those British coasters that regularly brought thousands of destitute Chinese immi-

grants hopeful of working up from rickshaw coolie to wealthy rice miller. The first casualties included the British captain and the chief engineer, who both died on board. The ship of evil omen was then berthed at an out-dated quarantine station under inefficient guard. During the night many a Chinese coolie swam ashore and made good his escape. And that was how this imported epidemic secured a hold on the city's half-million inhabitants. Among the first stricken was the English chaplain's wife, but she recovered. This time there were to be few European victims, for they drank the good water and were careful about their food. The same could not be said for the Siamese who all too frequently still continued to use the river as a sewer and at the same time a source of drinking water. When they felt thirsty they merely scooped up water from over the sides of their houseboats with a half-coconut shell.

However, even for the Siamese it was not so bad as the old nineteenth-century epidemics had been. Corpses that there was no time to burn were stacked up in the monasteries as before, but there were not so many of them as to be left to float about in the canals. People did not flee the city in a panic nor was the whole machinery of government brought to a standstill as it used to be. That was when there was no more effective way of causing the scourge to abate than the carrying about of sacred relics in procession and the forbidding of the slaughter of animals. The latter was a sin in the eyes of the Buddhists and might well have been the cause of the trouble.

Yet as of old I saw men fall down senseless in the streets



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as the cholera gripped them; and for months there were seldom less than fifty deaths a day from the disease in the city alone. True, there were hospitals now and the princes had given up their palaces as well for emergency use. The government tried to persuade the people to be innoculated and to boil their water. But there were many who refused to believe in the efficacy of the new methods. In matters that bordered so closely on affairs of the next world there was a terrible mental conflict between the old beliefs and the new-fangled Western healing that was apt to leave the peasant until too late in a dangerous state of indecision. But at least the Europeans took full advantage of their own inventions. No longer was the white population decimated as it had been a few years previously. The vaccine made the most fainthearted courageous too. No more were tales told of the white man who had eaten something that disagreed with him, as food so often did in those days, and then had died next morning, not of cholera but of fear.

In the course of my journeys upcountry I used to come across whole villages that had been entirely burned by order of the government as the only effective means of stopping the spread of that fearsome pest, the plague-carrying rat. But such things are to be expected in unhygienic native villages. They scarcely offered a serious menace to the white man in his spacious well-kept bungalow. What I think better illustrates the shadow under which one used to live in the East is the fact that when I first went to Bangkok it used to be thought that for anyone to get appendicitis was the equivalent of a death sentence. Indeed, had the young man who was my predecessor

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in office not failed to recover from such an operation I might well have never set foot in Asia. He was just one of a number who dropped out in this quite unnecessary way in the early 1920's. Some said the operating theater was always too hot, and indeed that was before the days of air conditioning. Others were of the opinion that the trouble was that Bangkok naturally did not attract the best surgeons. Certainly when a first-class Rockefeller man came out to study tropical medicine there was a sudden drop in the mortality of Europeans from appendicitis. That was because, though it formed no part of his duties, the Rockefeller man kindly consented to operate in such cases for purely humanitarian reasons.

Mention of Rockefeller brings me to the new conditions that have rapidly revolutionized life in the East during the present century. In this work American effort has been well to the fore, especially through the medium of the Rockefeller Foundation. I can speak at first hand of the splendid work done under its auspices at the Pasteur Institute at Bangkok. It was as a result of the antislake-bite serums that were developed there that much of the danger of jungle exploration was banished in my time. In the Philippines the triumph of Dr. Victor Heiser in the stamping out of cholera and other tropical diseases must be known to most Americans; as also must something of the lines on which has been fought the war for the conquest of leprosy.

The most killing disease in the world and the one most directly affecting the welfare of whites in the tropics is undoubtedly malaria. I have suffered from it myself in Siam

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and Burma and have seen the terrible toll that it has exacted in Ceylon. Naturally, therefore, I have followed the progress of the epic fight to control its ravages, and I have been especially interested in the virtual immunity in recent years of Malaya, which was formerly as malarious a region as any. Indeed, the successful world-wide control of malaria has come as the reward of the efforts of British research workers in Malaya. Methods of control first developed there by Sir Malcolm Watson have been applied throughout the Far East, Africa, and Europe. When applied by Surgeon General Gorgas they made the Panama Canal possible after the French had failed to control malaria and yellow fever. And it was after studying the methods in use in Malaya that two American scientists in 1916 began work on malaria prevention in the United States.

What malaria control meant in the colonies of south-eastern Asia may be judged from the fact that, before the methods of draining and oiling appropriate to each locality had been introduced, yearly death rates in labor forces on estates and mines at the rate of 300 per 1,000 were not uncommon. The superior stamina of Europeans stood them in good stead, but there were many casualties among planters, miners, and particularly among the railway surveyors and engineers. In 1938 an official could say with truth: "Had it not been for malaria control, British Malaya could never have been realized. Its populous towns; its railways and its roads which have unlocked its natural resources; the monster dredging plants, representing an outlay of millions sterling, which excavate its tin; its 300,000 acres of rubber—not a tithe of these developments

could have been achieved had malaria remained uncontrolled."

No less remarkable have been the improvements of food supplies throughout the East during recent years. Food of poor quality and doubtful freshness, together with primitive methods of distribution, were among the major disadvantages of life in the East that lingered in Bangkok after much had been done in these directions in the more up-to-date colonial cities. One had formerly to live almost entirely on the local market. This had little to offer beyond fish, and occasionally meat, both excellent for a little while after they had been caught or killed; unappetizing vegetables from insanitary Chinese gardens; and scraggy chickens and ducks which fortunately could be purchased before they had been killed. The market was the filthiest place in the city. The vendors were old women who sat chewing and spitting betel among their disagreeable-smelling wares. Nonchalantly they waved a flywhisk on request so that intending purchasers might have a better chance of distinguishing one kind of viand from another.

No European, unless he was an anthropologist, ever visited the market. That was left to the Chinese cook. Having picked his way through the loathsome collection of leprous beggars and pariah dogs that congregated around the approaches, it was the cook's duty to select whatever he thought likely to do least harm to his master's digestion. He enjoyed the outing because it could not possibly be hurried and it allowed plenty of time for the exchange of gossip with all the other Chinese cooks. Fish was not to be bought unless he had seen it brought in straight from the

sea. The purchase of meat depended on whether he had been able to find out for certain that cattle or pigs had been killed that morning. Most often he returned with just a couple of the tasteless live chickens that could always be depended on in the last resort.

For milk one had the choice between the canned variety sold at the Chinese grocery store (for that was before the days of the excellent powdered variety that was to make tea in exile taste more the way it does at home) and the "fresh" milk from cows kept by a Bengali under the dirtiest conditions imaginable. With the latter variety the typhoid bacillus was of course included without extra charge. Cold storage had only recently been introduced. It was considered extravagant to buy more than occasionally a pound of sausages or a pair of kippers from the Bangkok Manufacturing Company, which had the monopoly. Ice was readily obtainable from several firms but it was considered best to buy it only from the B.M.C. Other less reliable firms were suspected of making it out of the contaminated water that lay all too ready at hand.

But it was not so easy to get delivery of the precious ice as it was to order it. Delivery was especially precarious if one happened to live, as I did during my first two years, several miles out of town. There were then still no roads out of the city, and the only means of reaching the outer suburbs was by boat. My ice set off from the B.M.C. factory twice a week in a sampan paddled by a coolie who took most of the day over the journey. Sometimes he took longer for he was very apt to dawdle by the way, and not infrequently he got drunk at one of the many floating houses that sold

rice spirit along the route. What with the delay and a burning overhead sun my hundred-pound block of ice was liable to reach the ice box considerably whittled down. On the same trip there also started forth the indispensable drum of pure drinking water from the B.M.C's artesian well. But here again the wretched sampan coolie, as though not satisfied with what the melting ice did to lighten his load, would often contrive to see that the bung out of the water drum worked loose en route. On these unfortunate occasions the only thing to do was to fall back on our store of soda water until the next supply of drinking water arrived.

Contrast all this with the conditions of latter-day Hong Kong or Singapore where conditions as close as may be to those of up-to-date America prevailed. Markets were spick and span, beggars and flies had both been banished, and the produce of well-kept market gardens and modern abattoirs was laid out on spotless white slabs. Chinese salesmen speaking good English were at the service of the European housewives who, unless they happened to be too busy with bridge or mahjong that day, considered a visit to the market just one of the more pleasant items of the daily round. Indeed, the markets had to be good if they were to compete with the great Cold Storage that beckoned next door. The market chicken had to be just as well reared and well fed as its European brother if it was to be carried out to the waiting car along with some fresh green vegetables from the hills.

In any case, the Cold Storage simply had to be visited, for only there could be obtained the array of specialties so

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essential if one's dinners were to be kept up to the accepted standard of entertaining. There were to be found an amazing variety of choice meats imported from Australia, as well as the most succulent of fruits from California. At the grocery counter could be obtained all those fascinating hors d'oeuvres without which no drinking party could be complete. They would be delivered at the bungalow or apartment almost before one got back. And then straight into the electric refrigerator which was just one feature of the modern kitchen which had come to be regarded as almost as essential in Penang or Singapore as in the United States, thanks to efficient salesmanship and the adaptability of the younger generation of Chinese servants.

India and Burma tended to hang behind in accepting these innovations. They were further removed from the influence of advanced American ideas as to what constitutes good housekeeping. Several other factors tended to hold India back. Foods which arrived in such excellent condition at Singapore and the Dutch Indies seemed to find the added journey across the Bay of Bengal a little too much, and the handling they received in India did not improve matters. Then the fact that so much more food suitable for European consumption can be grown and raised in India, with its many hill stations and grazing grounds, has enabled the local produce to hold its own against expensive importations. Above all, there is the conservative prejudice of Indian servants and the deep-rooted traditions among Europeans as to what constitutes the proper way of life in India. Only in the great port cities like Bombay and Calcutta, among the commercial com-

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munities, has the entry of modern ideas on living been less hampered by Victorian tradition.

This half-way stand of India and Burma, lingering between the old and the new, is by no means confined to the kitchen. Yet one must be careful to distinguish between the dignified, comfortable residence of the Briton in India, again with tradition behind it, and the old-time colonial bungalow that has of recent years made way in far eastern cities for the modern apartment or brick-built villa. These sprawling wooden bungalows, such as I have known in Siam and in many an upcountry estate in Malaya, had their advantages. They offered space and airiness, the two prime requisites, to my way of thinking, in a tropical country; but they lacked every modern convenience and were intolerable to the younger generation of housewives. They had been designed without benefit of a professional architect, by people of a class whose one idea was to take full advantage of the cheapness of land to build something that was at least the exact opposite of their little city homes in provincial England.

To these spacious monstrosities the native builder made his contribution on the model of his own house by insisting on the first floor being made uninhabitable and good only for vehicles, boats, or animals. Rats loved such houses. They scampered along the rafters all night as though they were gangplanks placed specially at their disposal. I remember a particularly cheeky one that used to pop his head out of a sideboard drawer and watch me throughout dinner. In the evening as soon as the oil lamp had been lit, I got into the habit of looking carefully to see that no snake



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lay coiled in the armchair. And coming home late at night one could almost be sure of being met on the threshold by one of the same breed. It was a real snake too, which was more than could be said of those snakes that too often welcomed home the bibulous resident of latter-day Singapore.

The modern Malayan bungalow was the last word in convenience and it was furnished accordingly. The native inhibition against using the downstairs rooms had been banished so that it was a house rather than a bungalow, although the term survived. The apartment idea had spread from Shanghai, and luxurious blocks of apartments sprang up in Singapore and even in Bombay. Personally the idea of living in an apartment in the tropics never appealed to me, but there were many to whom it did. It gave them the illusion that they were not in the East at all, a significant attitude of mind.

Air conditioning was another innovation that contributed to this illusion. It was just becoming common in the more advanced Eastern cities at the beginning of the war. "This wall map shows you all the plants we have installed in the city so far," remarked the manager of a leading firm of importers in 1937 as he pointed out to me the innumerable red spots on his large-scale street plan of Singapore. "There's scarcely a business house of any consequence that hasn't gone in for it in its offices and now we're getting quite a lot of inquiries for private homes. What we advise in such cases is the air conditioning of a bedroom. It ensures a good night's sleep and just a single unit does the job." Certainly it would be difficult to point to any one

factor that was on the way to making the white man's life in the tropics more completely comfortable than was air conditioning. How effective it could be too, though no longer news to Americans, came as quite a surprise to Europeans. One could do twice the amount of work in an air-conditioned office and could arrive fresh at the end of a day's journey in a train similarly equipped. Best of all, one got the impression, when feeling so delightfully cool and gazing out through the blue-glass Pullman windows at the mellowed scenery, that it was a dull November day in northern latitudes.

In India rail traveling remained inconvenient and often uncomfortable. There are air conditioning, restaurants, and proper sleeping accommodations on a few of the best trains only. This fact and the tawdriness of most of the hotels, with their slovenly servants, combine to give the casual visitor a poor impression. Indeed, outside the presidency cities and a few hill stations there is scarcely a hotel worthy of the name. Elsewhere the wretched *dak* bungalow survives, where the traveler may expect a bedstead, a bottle of soda water, and anything that he brings in his baggage. But unlike the Dutch East Indies, for example, India does not specially cater to the tourist, although there is so much for him to see. There has been too little expansion in European business to encourage the growth of a hotel industry catering to the well-to-do type of traveling representative who frequented the more profitable fields of the Far East. Indian hospitality was geared rather to private entertainment in the homes of army and civil families. It was the custom for them to expect friends out from home

for the winter, perhaps bringing an eligible daughter who would enjoy the balls and parties.

As I have said above, these Indian homes are something between, and yet apart from, the old-time colonial bungalow and its ultra-modern successor. That was because they had a very much older tradition behind them which sprang from an origin that closely paralleled the contemporary edifice of colonial America. I have been struck by the resemblance between the massive Georgian dwellings of Madras, now dilapidated but once the splendid homes of the rich "nabobs," and their pillared American counterpart. From these old Madras houses can be traced the descent of the present-day Indian bungalow that combines dignified solidity with a better adaptation to the tropical climate. It so far embodies modern comforts as to qualify it to be described, I should say, as Edwardian rather than just out-of-date Victorian. Obviously in a country where servants are cheap and so plentiful the latest labor-saving devices could scarcely be expected to appeal. And with the alarming insecurity of the white man's tenure, that was yearly becoming more evident, nobody would be inclined to embark on a basic reconstruction of a well-tried type of domestic life that might take a generation or two to accomplish anyway.

The point that I wish to make here, therefore, is that it was in the Far East, and especially in Malaya, rather than in India that the latest advances in Western living standards were accepted with wide-open arms. They appealed to the planters, the miners, and the newly rich commercials, and naturally led to an overindulgence in the lux-

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uries they had been denied at home. In India, on the other hand, there was less temptation of this sort. Those few of the governing classes who remained were more intent on maintaining so long as they could the Indian equivalent of the English country gentleman's life. The luxurious living that we have come to associate with Malaya was to be found in India mainly among the wealthy merchants of Bombay and Calcutta. Their numbers also were on the decrease. In fact, a well-equipped residence in either of these great commercial centers was as likely to be the home of some successful Indian competitor, intent on taking all he could of the good things of the West while at the same time no doubt making liberal contributions to the coffers of the Congress Party.

Improved communications, as I said at the outset, have also done their part in changing the face of life in the East. Much had of course already been done in the nineteenth century that one is apt to forget about nowadays. The opening of the Suez Canal and the discovery of the electric telegraph meant as much in their day as has the coming of the airplane and radio in our own. Those earlier developments indeed marked a turning point. They began a trend that has simply been enormously speeded up in this century. But it is almost entirely within recent experience that there has come that expansion of internal communications that has transformed the social life of the white residents. The automobile has everywhere been responsible for this. Here again full advantage of it could only be taken in those wealthy colonies where governments were able to construct extensive systems of motor roads.

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As a result of this, there were fewer and fewer of those stations where one could feel at all acutely the loneliness of exile. Clubs and the social life of neighboring stations were brought within easy reach of almost all. And the ease with which one could get to a hill station in one's own car was a stimulus to make better use of week ends and short local leaves. This was good for wives and children as well as for the men who in the old days were too often inclined to make just a coasting voyage every time rather than face the tiring journey by railroad and pony to the distant hills.

So far all these changes seem entirely for the good. But we must now turn to the debit side of the account. In the old days it was customary to warn a young man about to sail for the Orient that he would probably have to get measured for his coffin soon after arrival. If he persisted then he was obviously one of the right sort and the most sage advice one could give was to tell him to stick closely to the local health hints, whatever they might be. The graveyards of the East are filled with those who failed to heed such counsel; but it is amazing how some did manage to survive to a ripe old age in defiance of the most elementary precautions. They must have had constitutions of iron and insides of leather. Thus a kind of natural selection was at work leading to the survival of the fittest. In general, the survivors were those of careful habit, who confined their drinking to the entirely beneficial sundowner. They were a splendid pioneer type who fought off the climate's enervating effects on body and mind.

But now that there has been such an all-round easing of life in the East men could forget how easy it once was to

be hale and hearty one evening and yet lie dead *and buried* ere another sun had set. So there was just a general slipping in efficiency and alertness. Fellow tipplers were not disposed to be critical, and one could slip quite a long way, especially in boom times, before there was any great danger of being sent home as "white cargo."

This deterioration did not pass unnoticed by the lynx-eyed natives and the agents of Japan. It played its part in lowering white prestige. And at the same time there grew up a sense of aloofness from native life that was fostered by the ease with which the speedy automobiles enabled the Europeans to escape from their lonely stations. They made the most of their spare time to indulge in the new-found social life that outside the towns had formerly not existed. At one time even planters had spent much of their leisure in getting better acquainted with the only other human beings that were around them, the natives. Now the obsession was to get well away from the estate on every conceivable occasion, and a quiet evening stroll through the native kampongs was unheard of.

Officials used to feel it almost part of their duty to devote leisure hours to the study of native languages, law, and custom. But all this has changed. They liked to go even more regularly to the clubs than did the nonofficials. There one would hardly say that the two classes were on very cordial terms. Indeed, there was usually a coolness that was as mutual as it was petty. The nonofficials resented the superior manner of the officials, and seemed to think respect was due rather to them as being the more permanent residents of the place. The officials they liked to

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regard as birds of passage, liable to be moved to a new station every eighteen months or so. However, though the officials usually kept well away from the noisy drinking parties of the planters, they were in the club for all that. And for all the petty friction, consequent upon a too parochial environment, there was a common bond of sympathy, or shall we say a lack of sympathy for the natives, which had the effect of automatically throwing all Europeans into the same camp in case of dispute arising between European and Asiatic. This could only make for a widening gulf between the rulers and the ruled, which was not so evident when the two remained on closer terms.

This barrier has been increased by living conditions having been made so much more suitable for the white woman to make a home in the East. While a few wives do interest themselves in native life, this is the exception. Obviously they have been the cause of the virtual disappearance of intermarriage with the natives, which used to be encouraged or at least tolerated by most colonial governments. Nor did this earlier intermarriage carry with it the stigma now associated with "going native." Thus it is recorded of a certain Colonel Kirkpatrick, an early holder of the office of Resident at the Indian state of Hyderabad, that he "married a Muslim lady of rank, spoke Persian like a gentleman, and in manners and costume could hardly be distinguished from a Muslim noble." This illustrates a state of affairs that was general in the East India Company's days and persisted even later in the Dutch colonies. Such mixed matches are looked upon askance today; yet in the days before so much bitterness had been

aroused they seem to have been a means of promoting a mutual understanding that is only too clearly lacking in Asia today.

Thus we must bracket together the automobile and the magnetic attraction of the white woman as the modern factors that have most tended to draw the white man away from the companionship of the Asiatic. As a natural corollary dancing has come to compete successfully with the appeal of such outdated pastimes as big game hunting and hiking. The reports of dancing at the Raffles Hotel in Singapore on the nights preceding the fall of the fortress seem to have been received with no little degree of irritation abroad. But personally I should not be so ready to condemn it. There was dancing on the eve of Waterloo, and Drake found time to finish his game before dealing with the Armada. Had victory instead of defeat followed the Singapore dancing, the latter would have been hailed as a splendid example of British *sang-froid*. To have stopped the dancing, so inseparable a feature of Singapore life, would probably have been to cause a panic among the Asiatic community. All the harm that dancing could do had been done long before that. For one thing, the semi-nudity favored by the white woman on such occasions was one more nail in the coffin of European prestige. Secondly, if a tuan was spending the week end dancing he could not be spending it improving his acquaintance with the country and people.

One of the most serious effects of this aloofness from native life was the widespread failure really to master the language. Admittedly on the China coast, owing to the



multiplicity of dialects, "pidgin" English always had done duty as a lingua franca. But elsewhere there scarcely had been a white man who lacked a good working knowledge of whatever the commercial language might be—Malay, Siamese, or Hindustani. This could only enhance the native's respect for him. Now in recent years it has been lamentable to see the way in which so many Europeans, especially nonofficials and city dwellers, remain content to get by with little more knowledge than is needed to call for a drink. As a result the English-speaking "boy," whom no one would formerly employ, was at a premium. If he was untrustworthy, which was more likely than with the old-fashioned type of servant, he had every opportunity of gathering information which might be of interest to a "certain foreign power."

Decreased knowledge of the Asiatic and his ways, combined with the speed of communications by telephone or air mail, made people less able and less willing to take the responsibility of making decisions. I have alluded to this in connection with the rubber-estate manager who is usually all too ready to telephone the firm's agent in the city whenever the very slightest doubt furrows his brow; while the agent in turn rarely seems to act without the orders of the London office, which at any rate in space is still quite a long way from the actual scene. Similarly governors tend more and more to rely on the home government's instructions. How indeed can one expect in colonial civil servants the same independence of judgment, now that the young district officer is denied the character-forming experience of having for long periods at a time to rely on his own

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resources. That was what his forerunners had to do in remote stations where, even if there was a telegraph, the chance was small of his getting help quickly in an emergency, and he had fewer educated Asiatic officials to act as go-betweens.

The quickening of communications with home had a big psychological effect also on the private life of the individual. Even though on account of laziness one continued to drift out of touch with one's relatives, the knowledge that one could hear their voices over the telephone at almost a moment's notice, that one could get back to Europe in a week if need be, did much to dispel the sense of distance. So did the familiar chimes of Big Ben, followed by the homely voice of the B.B.C. news announcer. And what more complete escape for a hot evening than to spend it enjoying the latest Hollywood production in an air-cooled cinema!

Thus to a life of ever growing ease and luxury there were added various illusory elements that together tended to produce a paralyzing sense of security. Most people were too out of touch with what was going on in the Asiatic world all around them to realize the imminent danger in which they stood. Along with the hardship of more primitive conditions there had passed away also the essential vigilance and readiness to meet the unexpected that had formed the protective armor of the pioneer.

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IN BRITAIN'S Asiatic dependencies two complementary trends were observable during the last twenty years which together were at work to weaken the grip of imperialism. One of these trends was in the direction of an increasingly complacent feeling of satisfaction with the status quo. This existed primarily where nationalism was virtually absent and where it was confidently believed that no foreign power would be likely to challenge British naval supremacy. This was characteristic of colonies like North Borneo, Sarawak, and most of Malaya, where with the civilians the possibility of actual invasion was up to the last moment an idea too repellent even to contemplate. The other trend lay in the gradual undermining of the strength of the British Crown as the result of constantly making concessions before the rising tide of nationalism in Burma, Ceylon, and most of all in India. Both trends were carefully watched by Japan as she made her preparations to spring.

Though most of the British colonies in Asia were acquired either toward the end of or after the East India

Company's days, under the impetus of private enterprise the exploitation of the colonies' raw material and native markets continued to be the primary objective. North Borneo, indeed, continued to be ruled by the last of the old "chartered companies." Its fixed policy was that there at least no unnecessary Western education should be allowed to encourage the natives to "get ideas into their heads." But in general the British colonial governments took very seriously their paternal duty of protecting the backward peoples from the worst effects of the too sudden if inevitable impact of Western materialism.

Malaya affords the best example of the working out of this policy. The opening up of the country for the growing of rubber and the extraction of tin involved great expenditure on the improvement of communications, public works, and public health. Of course, the Malay only incidentally got the benefit of these gifts of the white man's civilization. It would be perfectly easy to point out that for the most part he could have got on quite well without them. Boats and footpaths are still more useful to the Malay than modern roads and railways. The excellent system of malaria control has been rightly recognized as "Malaya's great gift to the world," but for all that it cannot be denied that the fresh-water rice swamps among which the Malays live are nonmalarious. It is the foothills and the nonswampy lowlands that are so malarious, and it was only when the white man began to clear these of jungle for rubber planting that he was brought face to face with the urgent problem of malaria control. The salt-water mangrove swamps on which much of Singapore city was

built also proved malarious when the mangroves were felled. But malaria had not troubled the Malays in their coastal fishing villages and healthy rice swamps.

Yet the government undoubtedly did a great deal that was purely for the good of the Malays, simple minded and unadaptable as they were, even though one has to add that it would naturally pay the government to keep them contented. It did its best, so far as the growing pressure for new tin areas would allow, to keep the Malay rice lands inviolate. It gave the Malays an excellent system of vernacular education. I have often been surprised when coming unexpectedly to a quite remote village to find that it was equipped with a well-built school and modern teaching appliances. In 1938 a Royal Commission was appointed to examine the question of establishing a Malayan university, for which there was a strong local demand, but it decided that the time was not ripe. With war clouds already gathering in Europe the Colonial Office could scarcely be expected to choose that time to introduce the type of institution that had so frequently been instrumental in the growth of nationalism in the East.

More in line with its policy of keeping the Malays quiet was the government's subsidizing the building of mosques. It also encouraged the Pan-Islam movement, which found wide support in Malaya. This offered the indolent Malays a means of escape from the growing materialism that accompanied the money-making propensities of foreigners for which they had only contempt. It was obviously felt by a government anxious to avoid trouble that such a nonpo-

litical international organization would be a useful aid in keeping the Malay mind off nationalism.

The complicated system of governments in Malaya is largely a reflection of the British desire to keep to the various agreements they entered into with the sultans when they got possession of the greater part of the country some seventy years ago. The Straits Settlements (Penang, Singapore, and Malacca), having come under British rule at an earlier date, were ruled directly as colonies. That was quite natural since they were primarily non-Malay trading centers founded and peopled by British, Indian, and Chinese merchants. But in the Malay States a façade of indirect rule was maintained, the Malay sultans being controlled by British advisers or residents. With these, or ultimately with the governor and the British Colonial Office, the real power rested in all matters except those pertaining to Malay custom and religion. The regime was thus a foreign authoritarian one, though the lower ranks of the administration—and many of the higher ones in the case of the Unfederated States, which retained slightly more autonomy—were increasingly filled with Malays.

It is difficult to avoid comparison of the position occupied by the Malay States in British imperial policy with that of the Native States in India. In both their preservation, however anachronistic, lends itself to a policy of divide and rule. In both loyalty was a direct result of community of interests. With the Malay peasants, moreover, a satisfaction at being ruled, to all appearances, by their own sultans was coupled with an absence of ill feeling

against the whites, for they had voluntarily accepted British protection as an escape from the threat of Siamese aggression.

The official policy of leaving the Malays as much to themselves as possible was of course bound up with the fact that they were, after all, only a minority, amounting to less than half the population of their own country. The people who for practical purposes mattered much more were the immigrant Chinese and Indians. These made up the bulk of the inhabitants of the Straits Settlements and of the large inland cities, where they formed both the wealthy class of middlemen and the mass of mining and rubber-estate coolies. Without them it would have been impossible to exploit the wealth of the country, and hence their affairs received the most official attention, once basic obligations to the Malays had been fulfilled.

The loyal Straits-born Chinese were treated with special consideration. They were even allowed to own land, a special mark of their having acquired the status of "Malayans." The Indians and foreign-born Chinese on the whole gave little trouble, despite their retention in most cases of overseas political sympathies. The more educated were as a rule too busily engaged in making money to lend ear to itinerant agitators, whether representatives of the Indian Congress Party, the Kuomintang, or the Communists. Labor troubles were on the increase, it is true, but the pax Britannica was enforced by police whose efficiency was born of long experience with Chinese secret societies. The odds were strongly against international political movements being able to make headway among

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the immigrant masses of low cultural level and self-seeking propensities. Indeed, the British and the Dutch police together exercised such a strict watch over subversive activities that communism was not a force that loomed at all largely, as it did in China and Indo-China. In estimating the causes of the decay of white rule, except in the French colonies, it is a negligible factor.

With the Malays contented and easy going, the Chinese and the Indian residents for the most part cooperative and prosperous, the Malayan government was blissfully immune from such serious internal difficulties, other than those inseparable from the economic depression, as beset most other colonial administrations during the last twenty years. The Malayan Civil Service were a hard-working, conscientious, and unimaginative set of men. They were scarcely comparable with the Indian Civil Service whose members were chosen for their ability to collaborate with, and if need be to pit themselves against, the best Indian brains. As has been suggested in the last chapter, the pioneering spirit of men like Raffles, the many-sided founder of Singapore, and Charles Brooke of Sarawak had evaporated. In the long list of Malayan residents and governors of the last century and a half of British influence in Malaya, Sir Hugh Low and, more recently, Sir Hugh Clifford stand out almost alone as able administrators. Of recent years it was everyday comment in the Straits newspapers that with few exceptions Malayan officials from the governor downwards were, to say the least, mediocre.

The direction in which the Malayan government's eyes were turned was, of course, the Colonial Office in London.



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It knew very well on which side its bread was buttered and whence came promotion. A useful suggestion coming from a nonofficial member of the Singapore Legislative Council was likely to be met with an unhelpful attitude on the part of the officials, as "Such things have never been done before, why should they be done now? This is not the time . . ." But if it were a measure introduced by the governor and obviously originating in London, the official band of "yes men" would tumble over themselves to register approval. In Malaya, as in the African colonies, the official majority on the council always ensured that the general policy dictated by London could be carried through in face of local opposition. Yet the frequency with which the holder of the office of Colonial Secretary has been changed in recent years lends support to the criticism that it had come to be regarded as a place of rest for tired cabinet ministers, and suggests that the welfare of the colonies was not considered quite so important as formerly.

If, in the opinion of London, the Singapore naval base constituted everything that could possibly be required to ensure the safety of Malaya, it would scarcely have been for any official on the spot to doubt that view. Who would have suggested, for example, that a really large force of Malays, instead of the entirely inadequate Malay Regiment, should have been raised and equipped to guard against a possible overland attack down the Peninsula? The haste with which, shortly after the arrival of the first Indian reinforcements in Malaya in November, 1940, I was despatched thither from Delhi as one of the few peo-

ple with a knowledge of the border terrain rather points to the conclusion that prior to that time the possibilities of a land attack had not been seriously considered by the Malayan authorities. But by then the essential step of enlisting the interest and active cooperation of the apathetic Malays in the defense of their homeland had been left until too late.

The small number of articulate Malay nationalists, for the mass of peasants are most unpolitically minded, together with a few of the more thoughtful British residents, had long been of the view that the government policy of perpetuating the identity of the little Malay States was a shortsighted one. Worst of all, the one positive step of any magnitude that the government had taken of recent years with regard to the Malay States was a frankly retrograde one. It consisted of the decision to decentralize the administration of the four states that had long been federated under the control of a central secretariat at Kuala Lumpur. Its avowed object of returning to the sultans a little more of their original dignity, if not power, was thus allowed to stand in the way of the federation's becoming a nucleus for Malay unity.

The young Malay nationalists felt that this perpetuation of Malay regionalism, in the past the great obstacle to their ability to defend themselves against Siam, was robbing them of the chance to advance toward self-government. The first real grievance had been the unavoidable economic one arising out of the depression. From it now grew the political one that their disunity, to which one might add their laziness, prevented them from taking a

proper share in the affairs of their country as a whole and thus offsetting the influence of the foreigners, including the hated moneylenders. Certainly most of the sultans were backward and might well have been pensioned long ago. Only the Sultan of Johore retained considerable real power and influence. In one or two cases their mental powers were admittedly failing. But of these the old Sultan of Kedah was perhaps better able to manage his affairs than was generally supposed, for he has retained his throne under Siamese, British, and now Japanese suzerainty.

The net result of British complacency, shared by planters, businessmen, and officials alike, and of native apathy was that the defense of the difficult hinterland was left to recently arrived army units and local volunteers. The latter were civilians who naturally had little knowledge of the country away from the main roads and railways. The Indian Army units had only recently abandoned their mules in India, and so on arrival in Malaya their efforts were devoted to becoming mechanically minded. Hence they naturally tended to cling tenaciously to the highways where they intended to make themselves thoroughly at home with the new mechanical transport. Most of the officers regretted the change, as well as the lack of facilities for playing polo in Malaya. In the words of a propaganda booklet issued at the time: "The officers will always speak appreciatively of the qualities of the mule, how he could go anywhere, even where a man could scarcely walk, and how the guns could rapidly be brought into action at any desired spot. A truck is an impersonal thing but it has

given the regiment a mobility it never before possessed *as long as it is on metalled roads.*" (The italics are mine.)

No one seemed to have given consideration to the fact that living in the coastal rice swamps, especially in the strategic northern states where neither mules nor vehicles could be used and through which the Japanese were systematically to infiltrate and outflank our road-bound troops, there were more than a million Malays knowing every creek, swamp, and footpath. Had they been prepared, and indeed had they shown any propensity to want to be prepared, to take any active part in the defense of Malaya instead of merely being resigned to await a change of masters, the Japanese might have found their outflanking tactics more fraught with difficulty. A final point illustrative of this neglect is the fact that the very last section of the excellent Malayan topographical survey to be carried out, and I doubt if it was ready when the Japanese attacked, was the wide rice land of Kedah-Perlis, dotted with strategic little hills, that was to bear the first brunt of battle.

The absence of Malay interest in the defense of the coastal swamps has a close parallel in the attitude of the Negritos. These are the aboriginal inhabitants of the mountainous jungle that flanked on the inside the British defenders of the developed foothill region. These Negritos consist of some tens of thousands of naked little nomads, armed with blowpipes. They roam about in the jungle at will, knowing every wild animal track as though it were a high road. They construct no permanent dwellings and never stay longer in one place than is necessary to grow a

quick crop of roots in a jungle clearing. It was this particular uneconomical trait that brought them up against the Forest Department, for otherwise the government would have been content to leave them alone.

This inharmonious relationship came to my notice when in 1937 I happened to be staying in Taiping at the house of Mr. H. D. Noone, the Malayan government anthropologist. Such an occasion was always enjoyable, for Noone's companionship made a refreshing change from that of the mass of more orthodox British residents. His unfailing enthusiasm for his work and his particular craze of the moment were infectious. At one time it was the latest methods of filming natives that was engrossing his attention, at another he was full of some new psychological means of studying the natives' most secret thoughts. This he had learned from an American anthropologist who when passing through Malaya had availed himself of Noone's ever ready hospitality.

Unfortunately one saw all too little of Noone, for he spent some eight months of the year wandering among his beloved Negritos in the mountains of the Peninsula's core. Yet even when Noone was away his house was never untenanted. At least some back rooms and the garden were always occupied by a varied collection of aborigines from different parts of Malaya and the Indies. Noone maintained these unusual retainers at his own expense in order to study their habits and language more closely at his leisure. So any friend of Noone's soon got used to the idea of seeing a wild man from Borneo harmlessly coiled up on the verandah, and raised no question as to the advisa-

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bility of allowing a New Guinea headhunter to assist the Chinese cook in sharpening the carving knife.

It was not with any particular surprise, therefore, that during my stay at Taiping in 1937, on returning from an outing, I came back to the house to find that our numbers had been increased by three Negrito chiefs. Complete with war paint and fearsome-looking blowguns, they encamped themselves on the lawn. However, I soon learned from Noone that serious business was afoot. In fact, they were all but on the war path. It appeared that they had come to seek Noone's help and advice, for was he not the one European who knew their language and who had on frequent occasions befriended their people? Now their complaint was that the state forest officers were preventing the Negritos from the indiscriminate felling of timber, which, wasteful as it was from the government point of view, was a necessary consequence of their primitive mode of life. Affairs had reached a deadlock, it seemed, and failing Noone's intervention, the chiefs had decided that they were going to choose the only way out that their instinct prompted. They were going to assemble their warriors, three thousand strong, and march upon the British Resident at Ipoh.

Such a threat seemed too absurd to be taken seriously. Yet the chiefs were evidently in earnest and something had to be done. It is doubtful if the Malay police would have faced the forest dwarfs with their dreaded poison darts. But if the Indian regiment quartered in Perak were summoned the world would have witnessed the spectacle of harmless aborigines being shot down by British mercen-

aries. What headlines for the world press! It was clear that Noone would have to act quickly if he was to prevent a tragedy. He realized that the Negritos had a genuine grievance, and as always, anthropologist first, government official second, his sympathy was with the little people who looked to him for protection. He did not stop to think how his action might affect his own position. Quickly he hastened to the Resident at Ipoh, while the Negrito chiefs waited in the Taiping garden. Fortunately his arguments prevailed. The Negritos obtained redress and were left alone in the haunts of their forefathers, at least for the time being.

But the story has a sequel. When Japan struck I believe Noone was pursuing his researches far away in the jungle and probably had no warning of his danger from any civilized source of information. Still one may be sure that his Negrito friends would have helped him and, if at all possible, would have led him to safety. Of that as yet we know nothing. His story, if it ever reaches us, may prove to be a touching epic of friendship and mutual trust between the white man and the savage. Unfortunately, if press reports are true, there is a darker side to the picture. The Negrito never forgets past wrongs. Hence one may be inclined to believe the reports that Negritos were the guides who led the Japanese troops through the unknown jungle paths that enabled them to outflank the mountain as well as the coastal anchors of the thin and weary British line.

Thus the loss of Malaya may be attributed to the combination of make-believe immunity from invasion with a fail-

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ure to appreciate the value that the rural population could have been for the defense of the hinterland. No doubt the Negritos could have given only limited help, but it is a pity that such help as they could give was to the enemy. Much more serious was the fact that, while failing to give to the apathetic Malays unity and an interest in defending the country, the way was left open for the poison of Japanese propaganda. Only quite recently had the mass of Malays heard of Japan through the medium of their new nationalistic newspapers. And then came specious promises of a leading position at last in their own country and a most honorable role in a large Pan-Malay union that was to include the whole Malay stock throughout the Indies and Philippines.

In Burma we find that conditions were quite different from those in Malaya. Here a vigorous hostile nationalism had already gone far to undermine Britain's hold on the country by the time Japan threw her weight into the balance. Yet in Burma this nationalism had taken a curious turn. It was so deflected that its main force was felt by the immigrant Indians rather than by the governing British. This is seen in a remark made to me, when I last visited Burma late in 1938, by the manager of a leading British store. I had commented on the unusual poverty and lack of variety of his stock.

"We don't feel like keeping much stock here under present conditions, I can tell you," he replied; "the Burmans say they're going to have the Indians out in three years and the Europeans out in five."



Actually Japanese assistance enabled them to get rid of both in almost exactly three years from that time, but the point is the priority that had been given to the Indians.

This hatred of the Indians goes back to the period following the second Burmese war in the middle of the last century. The British had to encourage Indian immigrants to come to till the newly opened rice fields in Lower Burma because the proud Burmans preferred to retire to northern Burma which remained under native rule. Later, when the whole country was united under British rule, the Indians made the most of its annexation to the British Empire. In particular they plied the trade of moneylender among the thriftless Burman farmers. As a result there developed a feud in Burma between the people of the country and the immigrant middlemen and moneylenders which assumed much more violent proportions than the usual dislike of these people elsewhere in southeastern Asia. Indeed, it came to draw most of the fire of nationalism. I have noticed a growth of anti-British feeling of late years, more especially as the country began to come under the influence of Japanese propaganda which reminded the younger Burman generation of half-forgotten wrongs. But even more than in India was the fight to be rid of white rule stultified in Burma by disunity among the Asiatics.

Nevertheless, that the Burmans had by 1938 already gone a long way toward the attainment of their objects would obviously seem to follow from the anxiety of the British merchant I have just quoted. Indeed, the last fifteen years saw a big movement in this direction in accord-

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ance with the British method of according advancement in large installments whenever local agitation or home opinion absolutely demands it. This is a distinction from the Dutch method of only gradually preparing its dependents for self-rule.

Until just over twenty years ago Burma was ruled by Britain directly, just like any other province of the Indian Empire. Not until after the First World War did any real signs of nationalism appear as a result of the general waning of European prestige throughout the East. The British then reluctantly yielded ground and in 1923 granted to Burma certain reforms that had just been made effective in the other Indian provinces. Two million men and women were enfranchised, but a difficulty in finding responsible political leaders soon made its appearance. As elsewhere in Asia the new nationalism did not center around any surviving members of the old royal family. It found its focus in those few who had obtained a higher Western education. It may be said at once, however, that in Burma as elsewhere in Asia both the Western education and the democratic principles of government handed out to the Burmans by the British were not accepted because there was anything about them that innately appealed to the Burman nationalists. They were accepted merely as the weapons that had unaccountably been placed in their hands by their white masters and which, in their unarmed state, were the only weapons available that offered a hope of ultimately getting rid of their rulers.

As a matter of fact, so far as education was concerned the Burmans greatly valued their own Buddhist culture.

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On account of the monastic education which was compulsory for all males, the population were among the most literate of Asiatic countries. Absence of caste difficulties, another advantage of Buddhism, should have given the Burmans the cohesion that has been so lacking in India. As it turned out, however, hatred of the immigrant Indians because of their extortionate moneylending and superior business acumen, coupled with the desire of one party to get the better of the other in a spirit of oriental despotism and with a complete failure, born of inexperience, to appreciate the principles of democracy, prevented the Burmans from making much use of the weapons leading to self-government that had been placed in their hands.

As a result of the reforms conceded to India in 1935, and in accordance with the outcry for separation, Burma became a distinct dependency with a constitution that roughly approximated to that of the Philippines under the Commonwealth. It was intended to be a period of transition on the way to dominion status. The governor still had the power of veto and was backed by the overwhelming strength of the British and the Indian garrison. There was also a large force of military police recruited from Gurkhas and non-Burman hill tribes, the incipient Burman army being restricted to four Burmese battalions. But, despite all this backing of force, the British governor's position was morally weaker than it had been in the old autocratic days, for on most matters he was obliged to consult his Burman ministers.

These ministers were of course members of the majority party, but it was in the securing of a stable and responsible

majority that in practice the whole system broke down. As I have suggested above, the Burman leaders lacked political judgment. The majority of the moment was inclined to do all that it could to take advantage of its temporarily supreme position. It was prone to sacrifice all sense of proportion in order to vent its hatred on the Indians, who with certain other minorities, in order to secure adequate representation, had to be elected on a communal basis. In course of time the multiplication of Burman parties, the springing up of new leaders right and left, all primarily interested in the attainment of selfish ends, reduced the constitution to an unworkable fiasco.

Outward signs of this degeneration, which gave one the feeling that chaos was at hand, became increasingly in evidence every time I visited Burma between the rebellion in 1930 and the anti-Indian riots of 1938. There was a progressive growth of contempt for authority and a rapid increase in crime. When I first knew Burma it used to be the custom to say that all the robbers and murderers were felons seeking safety from beyond the Siamese border. Later it was for Siam to complain of the influx of criminals escaping from justice in Burma. At the same time an increasingly anti-British feeling, encouraged by extremist Buddhist monks, university students, and Japanese influence, led in recent years to the formation of a powerful pro-Japanese party. This party made no pretense that it would not prefer Japanese to British rule. And it won over U Saw, who before he became premier had been the instigator, late in 1938, of a civil disobedience campaign. The result, therefore, of twenty years of Burmese nation-

alism was that it had so weakened the British power that with less than half-hearted Burmese support it was unable to save the country from Japanese invasion.

By comparison with Burma, the advance made toward parliamentary self-government in Ceylon is such that it gives much more hope for the future of democracy in Asia than does the record of most other Asiatic countries. But from the point of view of the decline of British imperialism Ceylon provides the very clearest example of the general rule that concessions are granted grudgingly as the result of a weakening in the face of continued agitation. In Ceylon the concessions resulted entirely from the islanders' own efforts, whereas in Burma there was at first little demand, and the reforms that stimulated nationalism were merely incidental to changes in the Indian constitution.

As with Malaya, so in Ceylon there was no original cause for anti-British feeling. In the coastal regions the British merely replaced the Dutch in 1795, while the Singhalese of the Kandyan kingdom, which occupied the island's central mountainous core, voluntarily handed over their country to Britain. They did this in 1815 after having expelled their own tyrannical ruler. In accepting the gift, Britain undoubtedly received in addition to the material wealth of this rich territory a very much larger share of the white man's burden than the island's mere 23,000 square miles could have been guessed to entail. Certainly its population was comprised of elements as mutually antagonistic as anything to be found in India or elsewhere.

At the present day, besides 3,500,000 Buddhist Sin-

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ghalese there are over 1,000,000 Tamil Indians, more than half of them recent arrivals from India. Most of these work on the tea and rubber estates. Then there are in addition over 300,000 Moslems, a fifth of them born in India. Until recently there was not only the usual friction between the Tamil Hindus and the Moslems, which originated in India, but each of these religious groups differed among themselves according to whether their birthplace was India or Ceylon. Then, also until recent years, the Kandyans nursed a grudge against the coastal Singhalese for ever having allowed the Dutch to get a foothold on the island. Most of all, the Singhalese, like the Malays and the Burmans, shared a common dislike for the Tamils. They regarded them as unwanted intruders who had been doing their best to overrun the northern half of the country for centuries.

In 1915 an event occurred which, though most regrettable at the time, had the unexpected effect of uniting all these various elements. It lead, moreover, to the granting of important concessions which set the island on the road toward internal peace and self-government. A clash occurred between Buddhist and Moslem traders as a result of which an inefficient, panic-stricken governor ordered an inexperienced garrison commander to fire on the rioters. This error of judgment brought bitterness and agitation in its train to such an extent that in 1924 the Colonial Office was obliged to introduce a series of far-reaching reforms.

Probably the government was induced to give way in this first instance in the knowledge that in Ceylon the 9,000

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European planters and businessmen do not stand so much alone and in need of official protection as the corresponding class in most other British colonies. It had the support here of the influential and well-educated group of 30,000 Dutch Eurasians, or burghers as they are locally known. These Dutch Eurasians, like their cousins in Java, are a more sturdy type than one usually associates with the offspring of the mixed marriage. Their well-being had been encouraged by the Dutch for the very reason that their support of white rule was most valuable, although as we shall see in this the Dutch of Java were ultimately to be disappointed. In Ceylon the burghers live very much like Europeans and have quite a considerable stake in the country's wealth.

But these first fruits were the thin end of the wedge, for the Ceylonese made such satisfactory progress that their further advancement was inevitable. The reforms culminated in 1929 in the usual colonial Legislative Council being replaced by a State Council having administrative as well as legislative functions. The membership of this council now consisted of fifty elected and eight nominated unofficial members as well as three officials, so that in effect the country became 80 per cent self-governing. More than almost any other colony it now approached the goal of dominion status. At the same time the mode of election of members of the State Council was changed to a more democratic basis. The former communal representation, which had only tended to perpetuate religious and racial incompatibility, was abolished. Instead, a system of territorial representation was substituted. All prop-

erty and literacy qualifications were removed and the franchise was extended to adults of both sexes.

The experiment has proved remarkably successful, for there has been an absence of the old communal trouble in Ceylon for years. Only if and when we see whether this apparent unity is able to stand the test of attack from without, as the Philippines did, shall we be in a position to judge as to whether a similar development of self-government might not have delayed the conquest of Malaya. Japanese propagandists have been busy in Ceylon as elsewhere. But here the main basis on which they depended to quicken anti-British feeling in Malaya and Burma is lacking. Indian infiltration into the island long antedates European occupation, and the Singhalese have themselves achieved a new prosperity from the development of the country with Tamil labor. If Japan controlled India, the situation would of course be different. Recently good-humored talks took place between the Indian and Ceylon governments on the delicate subjects of Tamil immigration, quotas, and franchise. In other hands these questions could soon be used to revive the old racial bitterness and set Tamil at the throat of Singhalese in the lust for despotic control of the island.

From the point of view of the present line of inquiry the interest of Ceylon is that its various peoples, as a result of united effort, have performed a somewhat remarkable feat. They have advanced to a point where only—no small proviso, be it admitted—the governor's veto and the force behind it stand in the way of complete freedom—a freedom for which, however, it can only hope, if at all, in



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Britain's own good time. However, it was reported on December 21, 1942, that the Ceylon National Congress, a party dominated by younger patriots, had just gone so far as to pass a resolution demanding freedom, not dominion status, after the war, the United Nations being asked to guarantee this.

With this information, we can now pass beyond this stage and see that in India a spiritual force, incomprehensible to the materialistic West, was to shake the majesty and power of imperialism to its very foundations.

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THE MYSTERIOUS revolutionary force that caused British rule in India to totter was the discovery, or rather the re-discovery, of Mohandas Gandhi. This remarkable man's influence began to make itself seriously felt immediately after the First World War. In common with others I have not failed to notice in the course of my periodical visits to India over the last twenty years the decline of European prestige that has marched side by side with the rise of Gandhi. But my point of view had been that of the man in the street. Only when in 1940 the war gave me the opportunity of seeing from the inside something of the way in which India was governed did the difficulty of adapting the old-fashioned materialistic regime to meet this new menace become apparent to me.

Before I come to this I must outline the preliminary phase of the growth of Indian nationalism which we have seen reflected in contemporary parallel developments in Burma and Ceylon. During this preliminary phase the nationalists took for the most part the course of opposing material arguments plus occasional violence to over-

whelming material force, a strategy that offered them little hope of dislodging the strongly entrenched British power.

Prior to the Indian Mutiny of 1857 comparatively good relations had existed between the East India Company's employees and the Indians with whom they came in contact. But the establishment of a rigid bureaucracy under the Crown led to a wide gulf becoming fixed between the white governing race and the governed. Then, dissatisfaction with the stereotyped form that the administration had taken in the late Victorian era led in the eighties to the growth of nationalism. Reluctantly Britain responded in the only way she understood. She began to introduce the elements of self-government in the belief that eventually India could be fitted for home rule within the Empire. This goal was thought to be a long way off, so far off indeed that it needed scarcely to be taken into serious consideration. In the meantime no one doubted for one moment that the Army could ever prove to be other than all that was necessary to safeguard the real power that was retained by the viceroy and the (mainly British) Indian Civil Service. And, while the political concessions I am going to mention were granted from time to time, that comfortable belief remained unchanged, at least until Gandhi stepped upon the troubled stage of Indian politics.

There was little fear of trouble so long as politics remained the concern of the few, mainly of the small Indian professional class, as it did until the close of the nineteenth century. Those were the halcyon days of liberalism in England, and hence not unnaturally the activities of

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these westernized few, who seemed to be ready to advance slowly along the path that was being laid out for them, were not viewed with great disfavor. But another factor was coming into play. University education was bringing the English language and English political ideas to an ever widening circle of Indians who, while accepting these with alacrity, were less ready to sacrifice their Indian point of view to walk in the way indicated by their foreign overlords. This new learning was grasped more by the Hindus than by the Moslems, and the knowledge of English gave them some degree of unity that had not existed before. It also fitted them to occupy the administrative positions that were becoming increasingly open to Indians. On the other hand, the Moslems hung back. From having occupied a superior standing, as a legacy of their having ruled the country before the coming of the British, they now slipped back to a minority status. This resulted less from their inferiority in numbers than from their comparative slowness in picking up the new Western teaching.

Britain could scarcely have failed to realize that a limited allotment of self-government must in time lead to its logical conclusion, namely, Indian demand for home rule. Hence it is not surprising that a pledge of ultimate dominion status was given in 1917. This step was taken in spite of the opposition of the diehards, led by Kipling, who could not dissociate themselves from the notion that Britain's function would always be to dominate. Certainly, before the rise of Mohandas Gandhi, the possibility of complete independence for India was never visualized.

Meanwhile, between the close of the liberal period in

1905 and the end of the First World War, and largely encouraged by the effect that the latter as an exhibition of European fallibility had on Asiatics, the Indian nationalists had moved ahead of British ideas as to what was good for them. The desire to be rid of the British and imperial rule came to replace the old liberal interest in self-government within the Empire. At the same time the nationalists began to feel that the form of government to be adopted by a free India could be left as a secondary consideration.

This change of outlook, though a natural outcome of the growing circle of those interested in politics, was stimulated by the mistakes of Lord Curzon early in the century. Despite his many excellent qualities as an able administrator, he never could leave matters alone to take their own course so far as possible, in accordance with the well-tried British policy of *laissez faire*. Forever interfering in this and that, he was continually introducing petty reforms, somewhat comparable to those with which the well-meaning Dutch began to irritate the Javanese about the same time. Though these reforms were often themselves excellently conceived, their application displayed a regrettable lack of judgment. By his partitioning of provinces and interfering at will in the universities and in various phases of the administration, princes, people, and even Europeans were subjected to continual annoyance.

The result was the well-known wave of assassination and terrorism in Bengal. The ranks of the once small professional class of politicians had been swollen by a growing middle class who were very politically minded. They did

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not hesitate to make use of agitators to air grievances and stir up strikes and riots in the cities. To meet the situation while suppressing the terrorism the government made considerable concessions. In 1909 and 1919 it introduced reforms which set up a system of dyarchy in the provinces. While now no longer able to control the speed with which things were moving, the government's hope that India would be satisfied with dominion status as its goal remained unshaken. But in fact the reforms had only stimulated the nationalist desire for complete freedom. It was about this time, while the Indian leaders were uncertain what move to make next, that Gandhi stepped onto the stage. He showed them that progressive self-government on the lines envisaged by the Imperial Government was a blind alley so far as the attainment of the nationalists' now clearly defined objective, that of ridding themselves of the British connection, was concerned.

Gandhi had a Western education, for he had studied law in England and practiced it in South Africa. But when he returned to India in 1915 and took up politics his first efforts were directed to convincing the other leaders that freedom was not to be won either by debating or by rioting. It was to be won rather by awakening the pent-up moral force of India's huge but inert rural population of more than three hundred millions who could take no interest in formalized politics. He won over and spiritualized the outlook of the Indian National Congress, which ever since its foundation in 1885 had supposed that the taking advantage of the progressive self-rule offered by the government, though possible at an accelerated pace, was the

only practicable route to freedom. Now Gandhi sought to direct their thought into new channels. He revived their interest in their own cultural and spiritual heritage, at the same time harnessing it to modern political ends. He should be regarded in so doing as a modern psychologist rather than as in any sense a religious reactionary.

Earlier nationalists, particularly extremists, had not hesitated to stimulate the masses to action so far as they could reach them. But they had little practical success, for only the city dwellers were to any extent alive to the issues involved. That is why communism never made much progress outside the cities, where it has won support among the irresponsible class of university students and from time to time has been the cause of labor trouble. The great mass of India's population lives in tiny villages scattered throughout the vast sub-continent, and so far as material interests are concerned the ryots (peasants) are mainly preoccupied with escaping actual starvation. They distrust the promises of city agitators unfamiliar with their difficulties. Their outlook and living standards have scarcely changed since time immemorial. Their lives are bound up with religion and the propitiation of local godlings and disease spirits. They are all familiar with the abstract meditative life, for it has always been the custom for cultured persons to seek out village groves in their old age and spend their declining years in metaphysical contemplation.

It was to these simple people that Gandhi came as the ideal hero. With his asceticism, his frugality, his ethereal outlook, he seemed in their eyes to be the latest of a long

line of Hindu and Jain religious teachers of whose saintly lives their scriptures told them. Had he been presented to them as a new incarnation of a deity their untutored minds would have seen in this nothing of the impossible. In particular his sincerity impressed them. His daily life was conducted just as that of the traditional holy man should be; his wealth lay in his knowledge of the ancient texts. He did not tell them that they must struggle to adapt themselves to the unsuitable ways of the West. He taught that India's future, their future, lay in an escape from the Western materialism that had caught hold of the cities, a return to the simple life of India's Golden Age that he symbolized with his eternal spinning wheel. With the whole country a federation of villages, he preached, wealth would no longer be drained away by absentee landlords. That seemed a worthy aim, indeed, and one that even the most illiterate could appreciate. It gained for him the unquestioning support of the rural masses who were content blindly to accept his leadership in all the other issues that were beyond their comprehension.

It is not surprising that such modern leaders as Jawaharlal Nehru could not bring themselves, at the behest of Gandhi, to forego such cherished plans as large-scale industrialization on which they knew that India's future as an independent power must largely depend. But they were too appreciative of the hold Gandhi had obtained on the masses not to acquiesce in the shelving for the time being of these fruits of contact with the science of the West. For his part, Gandhi was quite willing to make use of the latest Western means of bringing his message to the people. No



one, indeed, has availed himself more freely of the radio, the vernacular press, and the great Indian railway system (42,000 miles in all). For years he has been constantly traveling, and his use of the third class at all times never fails to impress the peasants just as it is meant to do. He is a skilled mass agitator and his points naturally include the blaming of the British for exploitation and at least the non-removal of such age-old causes of suffering as malnutrition, oppressive landlords, and the evils of rural indebtedness. One could hardly expect him to stress such benefits of British rule as the gift of internal peace and famine relief.

Had Gandhi used his power with the masses to incite them to open revolt he could merely have been classed as a disturber of the peace like the Fakir of Ipi who, as opportunity occurs, stirs up the Afridi tribesmen on the Northwest Frontier. Like them and the earlier nationalist rioters, the peasant masses would merely have been shot down, for both the army and the police well understand how to quell insurrection. But what gave Gandhi his quality of true greatness and also made him a truly formidable opponent was the fact that he chose to fight with a weapon that was entirely compatible with his teachings. This was his principle of nonviolent non-cooperation, a principle that animated so much of ancient Hindu thought but was as little understood by the majority of his illiterate followers as it was by the British. Hence it proved so difficult to put into practice that it was never more than partially successful. But even so it did what violent rebellion could never do. For the first time it really challenged the supremacy of British rule which before the First World War

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had seemed unshakable. This Gandhi accomplished as a result of his realization that material force, such as Indian nationalism could not command, could only be circumvented, not directly opposed. Moreover, Gandhi succeeded in attracting the notice and sympathy of liberal opinion outside India and particularly in America. And in so doing half his battle was won.

It was after he had expressed his disapproval with the reforms of 1919 that Gandhi first instigated his followers to nonviolent civil disobedience. It aimed at interference with revenue collection and the paralysis of communications. A more widespread and better-organized campaign of 1930-31 seriously embarrassed the British power to rule effectively. Though only to a limited extent successful, this campaign more than any other factor led to the granting of further concessions that were embodied in the Act of 1935. While looking forward to an ultimately federal self-governing India, this immediately gave the provinces autonomy, and thirty-six million Indians were enfranchised. It was considered impossible to extend the franchise further owing to the prevailing illiteracy. These reforms gave small satisfaction, owing to the safeguards which still barred the way to freedom. Defense and external affairs were reserved departments which remained in the hands of the viceroy and his Executive Council; while the governors retained the right to suspend parliamentary government whenever they thought it advisable. Winning a majority in most of the provinces, the Congress Party took office in 1937 only with the intention of wrecking the constitution as soon as possible.

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The intentions of the Congress Party soon became obvious to anyone in India who took the trouble to read the reports of debates in the provincial assemblies. Congress clearly had no use for the whole system except in so far as it might serve to hasten the coming of freedom. The debates were completely lifeless, for the Congress representatives looked not toward the electorate but toward a party "dictator" who controlled their policy. As a result the idea spread that the administration was degenerating into an unreal farce, and, as in Burma at the same time, there was a popular decline in respect for law and order. The last straw was provided in 1939 when the viceroy announced that India was at war. This led to the immediate resignation of the Congress ministries throughout the country and at last reality was substituted for pretense. While leaders like Nehru and Vallabhai Patel appeared to believe that the moment of revolution had arrived, Gandhi at first counseled moderation.

There was good reason for Gandhi's restraint. The ominous nature of Gandhi's sway over the Hindu masses, founded on personal veneration as it was, had not been lost on the Moslems. The world at large, in recognizing the undoubted saintliness of Gandhi and the justness of his cause, had been unwilling to draw a parallel between his rise and that of more unscrupulous dictators, or to believe that his leadership would necessarily be irreconcilable with democracy. But the Moslems judged the meaning of events through oriental eyes. They saw merely the portents of a return to oriental despotism, to which they might not have been so adverse had they not found them-

selves in the position of a minority. Thus Gandhi, while he had awakened in the Hindus a new respect for their old culture and united them in a common hatred of the British, had reawakened in acute form a specter that under the pax Britannica had long been dormant.

This growing fear of the Moslems, whether justified or not, that under Congress rule they would be laid open to Hindu revenge has not only thrown them into the arms of the British but has led them to organize for battle as a separate Moslem League. It is not only their inferior numerical strength but also their lack of administrative experience that makes them feel their minority status despite their warlike qualities. Yet, even so, their numbers (80,000,000) and reputation are sufficient to make Gandhi anxious to placate them with assurances that their rights would be respected in the united India that he wants to preserve. His restraint has thus been due to fear of plunging the country into civil war. And from our present point of view it is important to note that it is this revival of Hindu-Moslem rivalry that has, like the inter-Asiatic quarrels in the colonies, to some extent offset Gandhi's otherwise considerable achievement.

The failure to defend Burma in like circumstances brought home to Britain the urgent peril in which a divided India stood now that Japan had advanced to her very gates. So essential was the defense of India to the United Nations' cause that Britain was impelled to make a final bid for an understanding with India's nationalists. The Cripps mission of March, 1942, not only offered India immediate dominion status but for the first time visu-

alized the existence of a completely free and independent India after the war. For the time being Britain felt obliged to insist on retaining the control of the country's defense. Unfortunately for the Allied cause, distrust and bitterness prevented the Indian leaders from either agreeing among themselves or seeing the larger issues involved. They preferred to continue to see in the present circumstances a chance to press their demands to the fullest, and Gandhi launched his new civil disobedience campaign, the effects of which have not been fully made public.

But that no new factors are involved, so far as the Hindus are concerned, or would be involved, however near the Japanese threat continues to advance, was demonstrated in the course of the Cripps negotiations. None of the leaders desires Japanese domination to replace the British. Had power been placed in the hands of Nehru and the more westernized leaders, they might have chosen to cooperate actively with the United Nations against Japan in the belief that they would certainly receive their independence as a reward in the event of Allied victory. If on the other hand they had been, as so often previously, overruled by Gandhi, and this is obviously what was feared by the British, the Indian masses would at most have offered nonviolent resistance to Japan. Then the latter would more likely have sought to disarm Gandhi by alluring propaganda than in the first instance to use physical force to accomplish the enslavement of India. The ability of the British-controlled Indian Army, with American support, to resist an invasion under the present conditions of

deadlock can perhaps be decided only if the Japanese put the matter to the test.

The extent to which the gulf between Indian nationalism and the British attitude had widened since the rise of Gandhi did not fully come home to me, as I said before, until I found myself in an official position at Delhi in 1940. Naturally in Bombay and Calcutta, as in Rangoon and Singapore, one expects to find the purely materialistic outlook of the merchant who keeps snobbishly aloof in a club life to which even the best-educated Indians are not admitted. The modern British merchant can do this because he is relieved of the necessity of maintaining good relations with high-placed Indians as his forerunners had to do in Company days. Thus while he has been able to prevent Indian invasion of his clubs he has been less successful in preventing Indian penetration of his markets. But if I had expected to find something entirely different in the official outlook I was to be disappointed.

It appeared that the generation of Indian civil servants, who in the tradition of Warren Hastings had made scholarly contributions to our knowledge of the culture, anthropology, and linguistics of India, has long since passed away. Their accumulated learning lies hidden in volumes that gather dust on the shelves of the imperial libraries. It has become the custom to think that such work is dead and has no bearing on the urgent problem of assimilating India to the West. And this at a time when a leader with the acumen of Gandhi was for nationalist purposes laying full stress on the revival of the traditional culture as a living

force. Of the Indian Civil Service men I have known, few displayed any knowledge or interest in Indian cultural matters. In these days of quick communications they are quite content in any case to take their cue from London. And there, as we have seen, the fixed policy was blindly to continue to prepare India for the now distasteful "dominion status." The men who might have known how to yield gracefully and pave the way for a peaceful transition seem no longer to exist. To send, in the last endeavor, a man to India who with the best will in the world yet lacked a deep understanding of the oriental mind was simply to court disaster.

At the same time one has to remember that British members of the I.C.S., like other residents in the East, cannot in these days be greatly blamed for a state of affairs that had its origin in the diminishing home interest in Indian affairs. Moreover, progressive Indianization of the I.C.S. had reduced the British civil officials from a one-time maximum of two thousand to a quarter of that number. There was less chance than formerly of brilliant men, capable of judging for themselves the trend of local thought and of making their influence felt in high places, being attracted to the service. The whole system was too obviously in jeopardy for men to feel much like delving deeply into oriental studies which demand a lifelong devotion and can flourish only in conditions of unruffled internal peace. The five hundred British civilians that remained were scattered throughout the length and breadth of India and there seemed to be very few left in Delhi. I noticed many houses that had been built for Europeans were now occupied by

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Indian members of the Civil Service. Not being representative of the nationalist-controlled masses, nor desirous of ushering in a new era in which a Congress-ruled India might possibly dispense with their services, they could scarcely take the place of the lost generation of scholar-administrators who might have done much to bridge the gulf.

Thus when I came to Delhi in 1940 I was scarcely conscious of British civilian influence. On the other hand the military were everywhere in evidence. High British officers swarmed around Indian Army Headquarters despite the progressive Indianization which was gaining ground, though less rapidly here than in the Civil Service. The rank and file of the Indian Army, except for a few specialists, are all Indians and they can reach the rank of major in combatant units and lieutenant colonel in medical and other noncombatant branches. But the majority of officers in the Indian Army are Britons who make service in India their career. On the other hand, all officers and men of the British Army must normally do seven years' garrison duty in India. In peacetime the strength of these British forces in India is as much as 70,000 officers and men. The British battalions are brigaded with Indian Army units throughout the country, originally as a precautionary measure.

I was appointed a captain in the Intelligence Branch and felt fully alive to the honor of serving in that fine army that had already won glory on the battlefields of the Middle East, just as it had in previous wars in which the safety of India had been at stake. At that time the Indian Army was rapidly expanding toward the first million mark. Its



splendid tradition prevented subversive propaganda from making headway in the ranks and it was first-class material to oppose to an enemy who respects only the argument of force. Naturally it was recruited mainly from the Moslem and Sikh minorities, the chief fighting races of India. Yet it seemed a pity that the Indian Army could not be more representative of India's Hindu millions, who in the past had known how to combine military prowess with spiritual power to defend any cause that was dear to them. It was easy to see how irksome the Hindu leaders must find this ever present reminder—though in peacetime no more than 200,000 strong—of the force behind the viceroy's veto. For, holding as it did every strong point throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan, it was difficult for them to forget for one moment that the primary purpose of the Indian Army was to keep the people in subjection.

I found none of the atmosphere of utter complacency that was bringing such paralysis to European residents in the Far East. The Army was very wide-awake in India. No doubt implicit trust in the British Navy and the time-honored belief that "he who holds the sea holds India" did not attract undue attention to the machinations of Japan. But to the constant necessity of being on the alert against internal revolt and trouble on the Northwest Frontier had now been added the new responsibilities in the Middle East. And in addition the Army was tackling with a will the distasteful task of mechanization. But to change from mules to machines is one thing; it remains on the plane of matter. Adaptation to the spiritual revolution that was

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gaining ground in India, for the Army as for the civilians, was quite a different thing.

The Indian Army Headquarters at New Delhi occupies one of those huge office blocks, which together form the Imperial Secretariat and whose size, as well as the volume of administrative work required to run the Indian Empire, may be gauged from the fact that they possess no less than eight miles of corridors. They flank the approach to the courtyard of the imposing Viceroy's House and form part of a grandiose ensemble of avenues, plazas, and noble buildings than which nothing could be more indicative of dignified stability. The whole complex began to take shape soon after the King-Emperor's durbar in 1911; and certainly architect Lutyens was successful if it was his intention to convey in stone the power and inflexibility of British supremacy. Within the Secretariat the overwhelming atmosphere of bureaucracy, the seeming importance of affairs of the moment, banished independent thought. To regain my sense of perspective I occasionally took the opportunity during a leisure hour to contemplate on the impermanence of all things in the shade of the Kutb Minar or among the ruins of one or other of Delhi's seven ruined cities.

The Army expansion had naturally much increased the number of staff officers in Delhi. Most of them were regular army men, but those like myself with emergency commissions were accepted just as unhesitatingly into the little world of traditional Indian Army life. Thus to study the type at first hand, its hopes and its fears, was an interesting

experience indeed. And let me say at once that I never hope to mix with a finer or more friendly set of men. They were drawn from those upper middle-class families that stood for all that was best of the old Victorian England which has been so long dying that one hardly realizes that it is this war that is finally killing it. Some showed me pictures of delightful old manor houses, their English homes, now falling into decay, for had their family fortunes not thus sunk many would probably have chosen the British Army rather than the Indian Army with its higher rates of pay.

The war meant longer hours of work for everyone at Army Headquarters. There was little time for more in the way of exercise than an occasional game of golf. What it meant to be deprived of the beloved polo and the delights of the chase one gathered from the tenor of conversation at cocktail parties, where all reference to "shop" was banned. This, of course, does not include such matters as pay, promotion, pension, and the chances of being moved to another station. After all, if deprived of these what other subjects of conversation would be left? Now it was war-time the question of whether there would be the slightest chance of getting local leave was a new subject that loomed rather large, almost as large as the longing to have a crack at the enemy by being sent overseas. I gathered that Kashmir was the favorite place to spend a leave. I also discovered that my idea of a holiday in Kashmir, floating lazily in a houseboat down an idyllic river while enjoying the wonderful scenery, would not satisfy the sport-loving officer. No, it ought to be a much more strenuous affair at

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Gulmarg. There, though it lies within sight of the snowy peak of Nanga Parbat, one is supposed to be primarily attracted by the fact that, as the guide book puts it, "It offers the attraction of golf, tennis, polo, cricket and other amusements."

So far as officers' wives were concerned, I discovered that a question of absorbing interest during the six months' residence in Delhi was the perennial problem of arranging for the move up to Simla for those months of the year during which the summer heat and monsoon rains combined to make life trying for Europeans in the plains. In wartime, with limited accommodation available and rates soaring as in Washington, to make sure of one's house or apartment in the hills well in advance was a serious pre-occupation. And then as the time drew near there was all the packing of household goods to be done, the arrangements to be made for getting the various servants, and their families perhaps as well, ready for the journey, not to mention the horses and dogs that even in wartime seemed indispensable to life in the hills. When the time came, the move up to the hills of the government, civil officials, army officers, and their families was carried out in relays and took the best part of a month to complete.

Simla retained much more of the spirit of Kipling's India than did Delhi. Clinging perilously to the pine-clad hillsides, for there is little flat land available, the same terraces of antiquated buildings did duty as a secretariat just as they had done fifty years earlier. Trainload after trainload of large wooden cases transferred from New Delhi each summer all the sacred files, bulging ever larger with

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the yellowing records of the past and the portents of the future; the ubiquitous chuprassis, those red-coated messengers who in their steel boxes carry secret messages from one officer to another; and all the rest of the red-tape machinery of empire.

In Simla, attaching it most firmly to the Victorian era, there survived the full glory of the "horse and buggy days"; or rather, I should say, the "horse and rickshaw days." By this I mean that automobiles and carriages were strictly forbidden from entering the crowded precincts, and if one did not wish to walk, then the alternatives were the rickshaw and the horse. The Simla brand of rickshaw is a cumbersome affair propelled by four coolies known as jampanis. They dash at breakneck speed along the Mall, avoiding each other with the skill of Paris taxi drivers, or else struggle with unflagging perseverance to get their ponderous loads up the steepest of Simla's narrow streets. The best people still keep their own rickshaws drawn by a liveried quartette. Outside the government offices where rickshaws plying for hire were wont to cluster, on sight of a fare the jampanis hastily as ever put aside their gurgling hookahs which seem to offer them their only respite from the dull monotony of a beast of burden's life. One wonders if they noticed of late how much more frequently than in days of yore it is a heavyweight Indian official that hails them, one of the ever increasing numbers who come swarming out of the offices at the luncheon hour.

But apart from this larger proportion of Indians in the crowd the old timer would have noticed little change in 1941 in the traffic of the Simla rush hour. On their way

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to restaurants, hotels, and clubs of the higher regions, mounted Europeans threaded their way among their brother officers who preferred to stretch their legs on foot and the throng of noisy jampanis ringing their bells and uttering their wild cries. At every turn there was as good a chance as ever of being stopped by some lost chuprassi who thrusts a letter before one's face, for he has forgotten his instructions and regards every sahib that he meets as a heaven-sent guide to the direction of the house or office he is seeking. Nor had the motley collection of native stores that front the streets changed. Their parasitic band of owners migrate from Delhi to Simla and back as regularly as clockwork, seeking on every possible occasion to catch the eye of an officer or his lady who might like to buy a fine Persian carpet, a star sapphire from Ceylon, or come in and inspect a fine collection of furs from Tibet. Quite clearly they at least had no desire to hasten the departure of the white sahibs.

Of course, the war had sadly curtailed social life at Simla. Gone for the duration were most of the "garden-parties, the tennis-parties, the picnics and luncheons at Annandale, the rifle matches, the dinners and balls," though long hours of office work still left a little time for the rides and walks "which are matters of private arrangement." After all, what more pleasant and refreshing after a long day up to one's ears in the files than a canter on one's Australian mare around the foot of Jakko. There the smoke of the pinewood fires somehow brought back, as only the sense of smell can do, memories of childhood days with horse and hound back on the broad-acred fam-

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ily estate in old England. Yes, there is something splendidly invigorating about the pine-scented air of Jakko that blew away all the mental cobwebs of the Secretariat, enabled one to forget the annoyances of native servants and clerks (almost the only Indians one had personal contact with), and above all to forget the existence of the teeming millions down below who seemed to have developed of late years an unconscionably tiresome habit of thinking that they knew what was best for them.

Simla was still like that in 1941. There was none of the physical deterioration that overtook the white man in the Far East; but there was mental stagnation. It all looked and was terribly behind the times, for it was the last stronghold of that *laissez-faire* Victorianism that for long had so successfully let affairs in India take their own course but now bid fair to let them get quite out of hand. The Act of 1935 had given the viceroy and the British government an easy conscience. There was nothing more that could be done, or so it appeared. The army officer was of course not expected to think but to act as and when required. So far as the keeping of internal peace was concerned, the kind of action he understood, though he hated it, was the resort to firearms when necessary. It was still effective, at least against those misguided people who so far misunderstood the instructions of Gandhi as to indulge in the old-style rioting.

What Delhi and Simla seemed unable to see was that the little man in his shabby headquarters in Wardha had invoked a power against which, for all its present limitations, shooting would not forever provide an effective an-

swer. Unless it was met by some new means—some new spirit of conciliation perhaps—it might grow and mingle with other intangible forces that were stirring throughout Asia. To these the Japanese, through their understanding of the oriental mind and their poisonous propaganda, might give temporary encouragement though merely to harness them to their own purely materialistic ends.

In October, 1941, the government moved down to New Delhi as usual. There was a great packing up, a securing of train reservations for horses, dogs, and servants. There was a last-minute endeavor to be sure of accommodation for the next Simla season when to all appearances the station would be more crowded than ever. But by the time one would normally begin thinking of moving up again a very great deal had happened. Among other things, Singapore had fallen. There were ominous internal rumblings too. The government would not move up in April, 1942; it would stay and face the hot season in New Delhi and thereby be better able to keep its finger on the pulse of events. Now the question that naturally arises is, will it ever move up again?

It is difficult to imagine that any purely Indian government would have much use for Simla. The enormous cost of the annual moves, entirely due to the inability of the Europeans to stand the hot weather in the plains, has always been an Indian grievance. So when I try to look into the future I see a deserted Simla. The old Secretariat buildings, like the seven cities of Delhi, are at last lapsing into decay. Even the monkeys, those most persistent of Simla's all-the-year inhabitants, have departed, for there is no one



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to feed them. Gone from the Mall, too, is the jostling throng of equestrians and rickshaws. I don't see a single rickshaw in sight. Or yes, perhaps I see just one. Kipling lovers will know the one I mean. It is a yellow-paneled rickshaw and the jampanis are dressed in magpie liveries. The hood is drawn as it lingers at the foot of Jakko; apparently it is waiting for someone who does not come.

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ONE IS apt to forget the extent to which in the past Britain's hold on India has been strengthened by the loyal support of the princes. Yet one has only to glance at a map of India, on which the territory of the Native States is distinguished from that of British India, to appreciate their significance. Not only does their combined area total a third of that of the whole of India but their population is in the neighborhood of eighty millions. Their strategic importance is enhanced by the fact that their territory is much intertwined with that of British India. Rajputana and Kashmir flank the approaches from the Northwest Frontier to the fertile plains of Hindustan. Furthermore, Hyderabad and Mysore, two of the leading states, occupy commanding positions on the heights of the Deccan plateau of the Peninsula. Obviously, on their loyalty and the facilities they extend must depend very largely the ability of the British both to dominate India as a whole and to defend the country against an invader. The Indian Mutiny of 1857 might have gone differently had not the Nizam of Hyderabad stood firm, and in the First World War the princes to a man

rallied to the support of the King-Emperor. Until very recent years, moreover, it would have been impossible to question the assumption that this loyalty coincided with a bond of common interest.

On the outbreak of the present war the princes were again quick to place all their resources at the disposal of the Crown. As in 1914, the first to do so was that magnificent old warrior the Maharaja of Bikaner. He is one of the best known in Europe of the Indian princes and was an Empire delegate at the last peace conference. His state is mostly desert, and its most famous product is the camel. The State Camel Corps, under the command of the then youthful Maharaja, distinguished itself in China in 1900, in Somaliland in 1903, and in Egypt in 1914-15. In the present war the Maharaja has been an enthusiastic visitor to the Middle Eastern battle fronts, doing much to encourage his own and other Indian troops.

Gifts have continued to pour in from the rajas and maharajas, each giving according to his resources. Thus the enormously rich Nizam of Hyderabad gave \$500,000 (U.S.) for the purchase of a complete air squadron. The maharajas of Mysore, Baroda, and other leading princes presented large sums of money both for the purchase of aircraft and for the relief of London air-raid victims. Others down to the very smallest states gave what they could. Thus we read in lists of donations to the British war effort such items as a thousand tons of coal from the state collieries of Rewa, two male and four female elephants for hauling timber in the Andamans from the Maharaja of Manipur, thirty cases of toilet soap from the Maharaja of

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Dewas, His Highness's Tiger Moth airplane from the Maharaja of Jaipur, a Rolls Royce car from Bhavnagar State, and a tugboat from the Maharaja of Morvi.

Then the princes have in every case been active in raising troops for home and overseas service. Before the end of 1941 the state forces, previously numbering about fifty thousand men, had been doubled. Several regiments had gone on active service and had distinguished themselves in the Middle East. Infantry and artillery units, camel corps, and even mechanized forces had been equipped. Indeed the various states vied with one another to get their troops up to the standard of training of the Indian Army so that they could be accepted for overseas service. At the same time the states in every case mobilized their economic and industrial resources for the war effort. They have produced a good deal of war material that has been a useful addition to the naturally much larger output of the great industrial centers of British India.

There are no less than 675 Indian states, varying in size from Kashmir and Hyderabad, each with well over eighty thousand square miles of territory, to minute Rajput states with only a square mile or so. Their association with the Paramount Power is ordinarily governed by the treaties under which each state accepted British overlordship originally. The British Crown has nevertheless retained every right to interfere when it thinks fit. In practice its policy has varied from the ill-conceived one of Lord Curzon, who left no stone unturned to set the world to rights on every conceivable occasion, to a usually more easy-going relationship. Thus the larger and better-governed states are now

very much in the position of sovereign independent units so far as their internal affairs are concerned. But what has worked quite well with them has incurred much unfavorable criticism in its application, as a result of the British policy of *laissez faire*, to the minor states. Its ill effects date back to the days of the East India Company, whose interests were primarily in commerce and not in the acquisition of territory. Then the princes whose territories and prerogatives had been guaranteed by the Company felt safe in behaving to their subjects as they pleased.

In the words of one old report: "The native prince, being guaranteed in the possession of his dominions but deprived of so many of the essential attributes of sovereignty, sinks in esteem and loses that stimulus to good government which is supplied by the fear of rebellion and deposition. He becomes a *roi fainéant*, a sensualist, an extortionate miser, or careless and lax ruler, which is equivalent in the East to an anarchist. The higher classes, coerced by external ascendancy, in turn lose their self-respect and degenerate like their master; the people groan under a complicated system of repression which is irremediable."

Stories of life at many of the native courts in the nineteenth century, with their degraded European adventurers ready to take command of the state elephant and drill the prince's rag-tag and bobtail army into a more efficient instrument of internal oppression; tales of court parasites, of troupes of palace dancing girls, and of amazing palace orgies may be among the most colorful, but they are also among the most disgraceful, pages of modern Indian history.

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These conditions in the smaller states have by no means disappeared in our own time. Indeed the laxity of the Political Department in tolerating the often oppressive rule of backward princelings, who in earlier times would have been expelled by their own peoples or in course of palace revolutions, has drawn much adverse comment. At times the department has stepped in to enforce reforms or to redress wrongs so glaring that they could not but attract wide notice. More often it has preferred to turn a blind eye, possibly in the belief that, while unimportant individually, collectively the small states have a strategic value that makes it imperative to avoid so far as possible friction with the ruler.

With the major states their individual importance is naturally such as to require careful diplomatic handling at all times. The more powerful ones are continually though unsuccessfully chafing against the ill-defined powers of British paramountcy, which still enable it, if it thinks large enough issues are involved, to interfere at will in the state's internal affairs through the medium of the British Resident. At least in the past their bargaining power has been severely limited by the fact that their very existence has been dependent on the protection of the British power, to which they are in all cases entitled by treaty. Most of the states are not very ancient. Many came into being only with the breakup of the Mogul Empire in the eighteenth century. Then and during the first part of the nineteenth century they certainly required all the protection they could get against each other's aggressiveness. Indeed, few would have survived, at least in their original form, down

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to the present day had it not been for the *pax Britannica*.

During the present century the states have had to face a new danger, that of internal revolution. This was due to the springing up of popular movements which, had they been of purely local origin, the princes would in most cases have had no difficulty in keeping under control, whatever ruthless means that might have entailed. But the fact is that these movements were organized or abetted by the Indian National Congress in British India. It was therefore in curbing these activities, directed as they were toward the undermining of the power of the princes in their own states, that British protection was most needed during the last three or four decades.

The states have shown by both words and action that they continue to value their connection with the British Crown. In a joint declaration of March, 1941, when affirming their united support for the British war effort, they referred in particular to the Imperial Government's "heroic struggle for maintaining the sacredness of treaties." While continuing thus to value British protection, for no doubt it was primarily the sanctity of their own treaties that they had in mind, there has undoubtedly been in recent years—and this is the interesting point—a steady drift on the part of the states toward aligning themselves with the rest of India.

Ever since the turn of the century the states have been increasingly feeling the magnetic influence of their huge and more progressive neighbor, British India. At first this was most noticeable in the economic field, for the states with their old-world type of institutions naturally tended

to lag behind. The railway is one of the first harbingers of modernization. In the course of linking up Bombay, Delhi, Madras, and Calcutta it was necessary to construct hundreds of miles of railways running through territory of the states, while Hyderabad eventually saw the advantages of constructing an extensive system of its own. Improvements in agriculture and the introduction of modern industries, largely under state control, have followed. Indeed, in these respects the leading states may now challenge comparison with all but the most advanced areas of British India.

It is of course in the political sphere that this rapprochement is most significant. As I have said, the expansion to the states of the activities of the Congress Party, and it may be added of the Moslem League, first brought home to the princes in a most distasteful manner the fact that it was no longer possible to live in nineteenth-century seclusion. Then, while they continued to suppress signs of internal trouble, including the communal disturbances which had previously been scarcely known in the states, a definite change of attitude took place. The more astute of the state prime ministers, though they still probably did not much concern themselves with affairs beyond the borders of India, did not fail to note the trend of events in British India. The Imperial Government's policy of compromise with the Indian nationalists suggested a weakness that could point in only one direction.

Thus it was that when the Simon recommendations that were ultimately to lead to the Act of 1935 were under discussion and federation was in the air the princes sprang a surprise. Of their own accord they led the way to over-



coming the apparent stumbling block of the states' position by offering to join in the scheme. It is true that many held back later when they realized that federation meant a limitation of some aspects of sovereignty. But this cannot detract from the fact that a new conception of the states' relationship to a free India of the future had been born. And when in March, 1942, at the time of the Cripps mission, they were faced with the certainty of an eventual grant of independence to India, their delegation could bring itself to declare that "The Indian States will be glad as always, in the interests of the Motherland, to make their contribution, in every reasonable manner compatible with the sovereignty and integrity of the States, toward the framing of a new Constitution for India."

The effect of this tendency on the part of the states to move closer to the rest of India has naturally been the introduction of democratic reforms. In many cases, therefore, their administration has been brought more into line with that stage of parliamentary self-government being experimented with in the provinces of British India. But it must not be supposed that the states' political leaders on this account are necessarily more genuinely in favor of an ultimately democratic form of government than are the nationalist leaders in British India. Just as the latter were at one stage ready temporarily to make a trial of it as the most ready means of getting rid of the British, so the states' politicians adopted the same line of attack. But here their efforts were directed against the princes, if not to getting rid of them, at least to curbing their absolutism that had been bolstered by the white man. For, like the viceroy and

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the governors, in every case the princes retained the power to overrule their ministers as well as many other attributes of personal rule. At the same time the wise guidance of prime ministers of experience and judgment has often succeeded in softening the impact.

Several of the states have evolved legislative assemblies that give hope that something on this order might ultimately solve the problem created by the evident unsuitability of purely Western forms. This is said to be the case notably in Mysore, where a popular assembly has developed along original lines. In it reforms are discussed with an informal homeliness and yet with an animation notably lacking in the Indian provincial assemblies. It seems to have recaptured something of the spirit of certain popular village institutions that were not unknown in ancient India.

It has, of course, been easier for the younger princes to take the necessary steps to meet the rising clamor of their subjects which has resulted from the activities within their states of the Congress agitators. Take the case of Baroda, for example, a fairly small but wealthy state with important manufactures. I knew the old Maharaja Gaekwar of Baroda well during the later years of his reign. His state was well governed according to the best principles of paternal autocracy; but he left matters largely in the hands of his capable prime minister, Sir Krishnamachari. He himself was too often an absentee in Europe. Unlike more colorful maharajas, however, the Gaekwar was not merely on pleasure bent. He came to England rather to foster his love of art and other intellectual pursuits. On one occasion

I remember he was among the audience at a lecture I was giving to the Royal Geographical Society on some of my recent discoveries. He was certainly one of the most eager listeners. Afterwards he plied me with intelligent questions while he carefully examined the exhibits. Nevertheless, one could not help feeling that this princely patron of the arts, noble as were his virtues, really belonged to the past just as much as did the ancient objects he was handling. His interests were out of tune with those of the masses of his people at home who wanted something far simpler, if more difficult for him to give, than the fine museum and art gallery he had recently established at Baroda.

On another occasion I had a talk with the Gaekwar's one remaining English adviser, Kenneth Saunders. He told me he wished the old ruler would give up more of his time to Baroda. He was uneasy about the future of the state, the meaning of certain whisperings among the Indian officials, about his own future as an adviser too, no doubt, for he told me that he realized that Baroda had no need whatever of European guidance. That was the last I saw of Saunders. A month later, for no apparent reason, he sought out a deserted log hut on the cliffs of Beachy Head on England's south coast. Then, seating himself in the oriental attitude of meditation, he poured gasoline over himself and met his death as a human torch. It was not very long after this shocking occurrence that the learned old Gaekwar also died. In 1940 his Western-educated grandson, the present Maharaja, was constrained to introduce far-reaching reforms on democratic lines.

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Within my own personal experience I am best able to judge of the extent to which the old order has changed by the fate that in some cases seems to have overtaken the old princely hospitality formerly lavished on the guests of the state. I will contrast my experience as a guest at Hyderabad in 1937 with the modest reception to be expected by a visitor to Mysore State more recently.

Although Hyderabad has a written constitution, the Nizam did then and still does exercise unfettered control over all matters of real importance. His wealth and power, for he holds sway over a people numbering more than fourteen millions, are such as to make him the last great bulwark of autocratic government in India and one of the strongest remaining pillars of British rule. As in previous crises, much may depend on his standing firm or yielding to the forces that are gathering. His position has been complicated by the fact that while he and most of the population of Hyderabad City, the fourth largest city in India, are Moslems, the vast bulk of the rural population are Hindus. The importance of his state is such that he has had to combat the most persistent and determined Congress intrigues.

Born in 1886, the present Nizam succeeded his father in 1911. In 1918, as a reward for his loyal aid in the First World War, the title "His Exalted Highness" was added to that of "Faithful Ally" conferred on a predecessor at the time of the Indian Mutiny. One of the richest men in the world, the Nizam's own habits are very different from those popularly associated with the typical Indian potentate. His personal expenses are practically nil, and indeed

he is parsimonious to the extreme. Nevertheless, it is said that he misses no opportunity to add to his fortune. I was told in Hyderabad that whenever His Exalted Highness visits members of his family in their own homes he expects from each male child in the household a present of a Hyderabad gold coin which he pockets with glee.

The Nizam, like every educated Indian Moslem, is devoted to the classical Persian culture. This is the common bond that gives Moslems throughout India a greater degree of unity than have the Hindus, who are divided on every subject other than their hatred of British rule. As a consequence of this all-pervading interest the Nizam's chief hobby is composing Persian poetry, at which he is adept. He spends much of his time, too, at his devotions in the royal mosque. Whenever he sets forth thither, or on one of his frequent visits to his relatives, the streets are cleared well in advance by vast numbers of police. They line the route and signal all traffic to a standstill. One rather gathered the impression that this was no mere relic of outdated medieval custom but that it was a precaution that had a real function in ensuring the Nizam's personal safety.

It was as the guests of Sir Akbar Hydari that early in 1937 my wife and I were entertained at Hyderabad. Sir Akbar was the shrewd statesman who for so many years as prime minister had aided the Nizam in steering the ship of state through waters that had been by no means always trouble free. As in other Indian states, official guests were accommodated during their stay in one or other of the finely appointed guest houses dotted here and there in the vicinity

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of the palace. In the absence of a resident host the duty of seeing to the comfort of the guests fell upon the dignified, liveried Indian butlers. It was left to the guests to introduce themselves to each other and to make light conversation in the grand hall in which they all met for meals when not dining with the British Resident or at the houses of their respective Indian hosts.

Our companions at the State Guest House at Hyderabad were certainly a strange company. There were two or three visitors like ourselves with purely antiquarian interests. There were also others who had availed themselves of their connections to cloak ulterior objects. They hoped to interest the fabulously wealthy state government in some strange project guaranteed in one way or another to redound to the credit of Hyderabad. I remember among them an English lady artist anxious to paint all the native types in the state; a Parsi lady hopeful of converting the Nizam to a new religion; and a secretive German-speaking Persian who was clever enough to disguise whatever his real object may have been under a passion for photographing anything and everything on which he could focus his camera. There was also the colorful envoy of a small Rajput state who had come to ascertain the Nizam's views on federation, which was still the topic of the day.

Despite the Nizam's own simple tastes hospitality at the guest house was on a truly princely scale. It was indeed so lavish as to make even the most ill-assorted party brilliant conversationalists; and those whose interest it was to find out the business of the others were seldom disappointed. The butlers were tireless in keeping every glass filled and

one had only to suggest a different vintage of wine or a different brand of cigars for it to be procured as with the wave of a magician's wand. Only when the time came to depart—and strangely enough that time did come, though not without discrete hints being dropped by the butlers in cases that looked like becoming chronic—did one find that there was after all to be a day of reckoning. This took the form of an organized parade of the servants, who in solid phalanx were duly drawn up in the front garden where the head butler informed one precisely what would be the right amount of baksheesh expected by each. We met the by-no-means-small demands of the various sweepers, water carriers, cooks, butlers, bearers, and so forth, and their assistants, without blanching. But when our attention was directed to about a dozen gardeners, striving between them to carry two miserable-looking pot plants as evidence of their efforts on our behalf, for it was the dry season and nothing would grow in the garden beds, we really felt that the limit had been reached.

Each guest was generously provided with a state automobile that was at his disposal during his stay. Those guests who had official business would pay their calls by this convenient means. Others who were merely intent on sight-seeing would probably resign themselves to the attentive chauffeur who would suggest a daily trip. It might be a visit to the stately Char Minar, whose four minarets rose in the center of the old walled city; or to the state agricultural research farm; or to the great new Osmania University. The latter was to vie with any educational institution in British India, and the Nizam had done his best to con-

trol the teaching by insisting that Urdu be the medium of instruction.

What appealed to us much more than these show places were the varied scenes in the city streets. While not so colorful, perhaps, as those of many of the lesser Rajput states, there was still much of that purely Indian life that is obscured in the busy commercial cities and ports of British India by a Western veneer. We were lucky enough to be in Hyderabad for the Muharram. On this festal occasion the animal on which Mohammed is popularly supposed to have ascended to heaven is borne in strange and picturesque processions, the mourners beating their breasts as they cry "Ya Hasan! Ya Hussain!" It is on just such occasions that Hindu-Moslem riots are liable to break out in India wherever Hindus in sufficient force meet such a procession. Perhaps it was to do away with any such temptation on the part of the rural population that the warlike urban Moslems of Hyderabad always used to be allowed to carry arms, a practice rigorously prohibited in British India, much to the dislike of the nationalists. But at the time of our visit to Hyderabad this custom had become confined to the Arab mercenaries of whom we saw one or two here and there mingling with the crowds, a murderous-looking damascened scimitar stuck in their waist cloths.

Another point that impressed us in Hyderabad was the strict enforcement of purdah. During the heat of the day women stayed indoors, coming out to take the air only in the evening. And then the utmost care was taken that no male should see them. In the case of the poorer classes one only saw backed up against the doors of houses horse-



drawn gharries into which the women climbed while their menfolk held up cloths to screen them from the gaze of the passer-by. With wealthier families suitable automobiles were substituted for gharries. For an hour or so in the evening the gharries and automobiles patrolled the streets at a snail's pace, allowing these benighted women to glimpse the outer world through narrow slits in the curtains. Naturally their education remains at a low level; for the fact that male teachers may on no account see their pupils imposes difficulties even with the upper class.

Though most noticeable in Moslem states, this backwardness of women is everywhere a serious handicap to Indian progress, for purdah is enforced among high-caste Hindu women as with all the Moslems. Thus many women of high station who are in a position to influence both their children and their husbands, who may themselves have had a Western education, are limited to the radio news in their own language and to the vernacular press if, indeed, they can read. They are in fact responsible for the basically oriental outlook of Indian nationalists, to which I have in this book not infrequently to refer. But emancipation is making some progress and may have a profound effect when it becomes general. Even in Hyderabad it is interesting to note that the Nizam's heir, the Prince of Berar, and his brother have both married beautiful emancipated Turkish women.

Despite all the pomp of state hospitality, which gave guests no reason to suspect that there was any cloud on the horizon, one can but feel that the Nizam, even as long ago as 1937, could hardly face the future with complete

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equanimity. It was indeed at Sir Akbar's beautiful home in Hyderabad, decorated with reproductions of the famous Ajanta frescoes, that I first observed a look of concern in his penetrating eyes when he discussed the role Hyderabad might play in a federated self-governing India of the future. When I met him for the last time in Simla a few weeks before he died, despite his ill health and to the amazement of many he had just been appointed Member for Information in the viceroy's expanded Executive Council. The old statesman preferred to talk of the past rather than of the new duties he was too weak to perform. And I could not help noticing that same worried look in his eyes as he spoke to me of the future of his beloved Hyderabad.

It was when I was on short leave from the Army that I happened to find myself at Bangalore. Besides being a great British military center this is also the seat of the government of Mysore, India's "model state." I intended to take the opportunity to pay my respects to Sir Mirza Ismail, whom I had known as prime minister.

"But Sir Mirza is no longer prime minister," I was informed by a wealthy zemindar from Bombay who happened to be staying at my hotel. "That is why I for one am staying here and not at the State Guest House. You have been out of touch with things, I see. The new Maharajah sees which way things are moving and has already made changes. Sir Mirza retired two months ago. He was too autocratic. He did much for the state, it is true, but it was not what the people wanted."

So when Sir Mirza asked me to tea at his house a day

or two later I took it as merely a private invitation. I realized that the rising popular movement had both clipped the wings of autocratic power in Mysore and curtailed its corollary, the display of wealth and old-fashioned hospitality formerly dispensed on as lavish a scale here as anywhere in India. As for Sir Mirza, the Imperial Government had need of men of his capacity elsewhere and he was soon after appointed prime minister of Jaipur, a state still governed on more paternal lines.

That he should do "what the people wanted" can never indeed have entered the head of Sir Krishna Raja Wadiar Bahadur, the late Maharaja of Mysore, though judged by former standards he was a worthy ruler of the old paternal type. So orthodox were his religious scruples that he had the greatest difficulty in overcoming the ancient taboo which forbids a high-caste Hindu to cross the seas; and when at last he was prevailed on to visit England a few years ago he took the precaution of seeing that his own native cooks accompanied him everywhere. Small wonder that he failed to realize the strength of the new forces that were hammering at the palace gate. Nevertheless, with Sir Mirza Ismail's assistance he unconsciously paved the way for change by improving education, while such state-sponsored industries as china making and silk weaving gave Mysore a prosperity that was the envy of many provinces of British India. And the rise to power of the leaders of a popular assembly and the limiting of the traditional splendor of the princely court could not be delayed after the death of the old Maharaja.

Thus have I seen the pomp and circumstance begin to

fade from the courts of India, just as I have seen it fade from Siam and as no doubt it has been swept away from the puppet courts of Indo-China and the Dutch Indies by the advancing Japanese hordes despite their alluring propaganda. But the decay of kingship in the East does not mean that oriental despotism is dead, for Asia still thinks on Asiatic lines. It merely signifies that the spirit of revolution is abroad. This brings in its train the destruction of forms that flourished under the white man, just because of their association with the hated white man's rule.

What bearing has the princes' tendency of recent years to yield to the pressure of nationalist India on the ability of the British to maintain their hold on India until such time as they are ready to free it? Simply this. It reveals the existence of a state of mental conflict and uncertainty that was formerly absent. With no reflection on their loyalty, it cannot be denied that this development must tend to weaken rather than to strengthen in certain emergencies the princes' wholehearted and undivided support for the British paramount power. Such an emergency might have arisen, for example, had complete freedom been offered to India during the present war and had Gandhi thereupon proceeded to make peace with Japan. In keeping with their new orientation toward the rest of India, the decision of those princes who had been led to tolerate the growth of popular assemblies with their states could hardly fail to be swayed by their nationalist-controlled majorities.

We cannot, of course, be sure how individual princes, so far as they remained free agents, would react in such purely hypothetical circumstances. In the event of a more

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or less successful Japanese invasion some rulers might feel that their duty to their subjects lay in making the best terms they could with those likely to become their new masters. We do know, so far as it was reported in the press, what was the decision in comparable circumstances of the Malay Sultan of Johore. No one could have more loyally supported Britain throughout a long reign. The Sultan had made huge contributions to the cost of the Singapore base and later to Allied war relief. But when the British retired across the causeway to Singapore the Sultan elected to remain with his people. Later it was reported that he had presided at a conference to discuss cooperation with Japan. Such events, coupled with the British loss of face in Burma, can hardly have been devoid of psychological effect across the Bay of Bengal.

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### THE POWER OF PUBLIC OPINION

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SINCE THE close of the nineteenth century there have been great changes in both national and international opinion on the matter of colonies. The result could only be to weaken the hold of imperial governments on their possessions and to encourage subject peoples in their fight for freedom. I have already shown, and more will be said on the subject in later chapters, how since the turn of the century liberal opinion in Britain, Holland, and even France, quickened by the influence of America, has led to the making of concessions to native demands. Before I trace the growth of this liberalism we must note that it has been by no means unchallenged. A factor contributing to the declining strength of white imperialism has been failure of the colonial powers, like the various sects of Christian missionaries, to agree internally or externally on a common policy or to offer a united front against an Asiatic competitor who for years has been scheming their downfall.

Whether the possession of colonies by individual nations really does pay them in the long run is beside the

point. That the exercise of sovereign rights over a vast territory and large markets is necessary for the making of a Great Power is the one point on which there was originally general agreement. America has found most of what she required in her own extensive continental domain; Russia has pushed across Siberia; and Germany, reversing the policy of the Kaiser, has sought to find her *Lebensraum* in a *Drang nach Osten*. In more traditional style, Britain, France, and Holland, followed by Japan, have looked for their source of wealth and strength beyond the oceans; while Italy, the jackal of imperialism, has by fair means or foul just striven to pick up anything she could.

The outcome has been the division of the imperially minded nations into two camps—the now familiar “haves,” the democracies with their increasingly liberal colonial policies; and the “have-nots” with no such progressive intentions. Unfortunately the latter, with their greater attention to the art of propaganda, have been partially successful in persuading many Asiatics to the contrary. Nor have the implications of two world wars among the white men in a quarter of century been lost among subject peoples now much more capable of understanding the issues involved than they would have been in an earlier generation. Following the Russo-Japanese War, these repeated catastrophies, climaxed by Japanese conquests in the Pacific, have been cumulative in the loss of face they have brought to the white man.

At the same time mutual distrust has lingered among the “have” governments. It is of course a legacy from the time when the East India Companies were actively com-

peting together for trade advantages, ready to seize what they could from each other or to outdo one another in intrigue with native potentates whenever opportunity offered. The pity of it was that this one-time healthy rivalry survived as an inability to cooperate wholeheartedly in the Orient during a time when Japan was everywhere seeking to drive in wedges. As one example of long standing we may take the case of Siam, which was to play a very important role in facilitating Japan's expansionist policy. Its survival for several decades after its neighbors had been subjugated was mainly a corollary of Anglo-French jealousy. This had led the two rivals of the *entente cordiale* to guarantee the integrity of the central portion of Siam, the last independent state of southeastern Asia.

Such a spirit was incongruous in a world steadily drifting toward a conflagration that was to decide the fate of world freedom and the rights of man. It appears that it was not until after the fall of France that the Indo-China authorities learned that Britain would not be in a position to aid in the defense of that colony, a shock that would have been easier to bear had it been made known earlier. And it would be interesting to know at what stage British and Dutch staff talks first took place.

What we do know is that Britain and France declined to link their colonial railways up with the Siamese system except across the supposedly invulnerable Malayan border, although Siam was anxious for such facilities. Similarly the construction of a link between Tonkin and the South China line hung fire. So far as the very desirable connection between Burma and Siam is concerned, a trace



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had been surveyed decades ago but nothing has been done. On the Indo-China side the Siamese locomotive had been whistling at the frontier for years without any answering note from the French. Ultimately the Indo-China line was completed to within a few miles of the border, where it seemed destined to remain so far as the French were concerned.

Had such connections existed, and with them the will to bring rapid overland support to the Siamese when threatened by aggression, then possibly their attitude, and that of the French, of acquiescence to Japanese demands might have been different. A coordinated plan for the defense of the whole region might have been worked out long ago. As it was, Japan's plan to follow the Axis method of eliminating her victims one by one was facilitated. The rail link between Indo-China and Siam was completed overnight. A highway was constructed linking Central Siam with Burma in a matter of weeks. Then Japan had a route of empire that we had presented to her so nearly complete that we might just as well have finished it ourselves and enjoyed the benefit of it while we could. It enabled her not only to conquer Burma and threaten India but also to drain away much rice, rubber, and tin with reduced strain on her limited merchant marine.

Now we can return to consider the movement that was to undermine the strength of the old imperial order from within. This had its origin in England in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the disciples of Cobden and Bright were to the fore in politics. To the liberals, both as good Christians to whom the repression of natives

was repugnant and as taxpayers who disliked having to pay for armies of occupation, the whole policy of empire building was distasteful. In their advocacy of Free Trade they wanted to see the monopolistic empires replaced by a world free from force and which was integrated only by the free flow of goods, men, and money. They wanted a federation of free and equal states linked together by trading interests neither fearing nor threatening each other; and they were opposed to the balance of power. Liberalism led to the growth of the free and equal British dominions and it brought India concessions that set her on the path toward parliamentary self-rule. But then the reaction set in. The beginning of the First World War saw Britain, with the other imperial powers, still predominantly occupied, if no longer in active empire building, at least in consolidating what she possessed.

The fact is that no very strong case had yet been made out against the old imperialism, in so far as economic exploitation was concerned, however far they might be prepared to agree to political concessions. The benefits of owning an empire seemed obvious to all and outweighed the disadvantages advanced by the liberals. The colonies provided a large proportion of the markets for manufactures which, owing to her huge coal resources, Britain was in a favorable position to exploit. They gave Britain a leading place in the world carrying trade and stimulated ship-building. On their return journeys the ships bought raw materials for the home factories which they had obtained from mines or concessions where, naturally, better facilities existed for British trading firms than would have been

the case had they been obliged, like Germany and Japan, to buy them in a foreign market. There were opportunities for profitable investment in the dependent lands where the safety of the capital was guaranteed by British protection. Though they were not outlets for surplus population, as America and the Dominions were, they provided safe and well-paid employment for the sons of middle-class families, either in the Indian or the Colonial services. Finally, they involved the possession of strong points like Gibraltar, Suez, and Singapore, which not only safeguarded British trade but from which she could make her voice felt in international power politics.

Now so long as the looms of Manchester were humming and British bottoms were plying ceaselessly to and from the Orient loaded to the Plimsoll line, no one, much less the workers, had very much to say against the possession of an empire. Their living was ensured by the first three benefits mentioned above and so they did not trouble to look any further down the list. But as soon as Indian industrialization, the inevitable effect of the earlier liberal policy, had made itself felt by taking the bread out of the mouths of the British workers, then this increasingly more powerful and politically conscious class saw the root of the evil in imperialism and the capitalist system. The great depression naturally increased discontent. The workers now realized that only the sons of middle-class families got the jobs in the colonies, and that somehow the capitalists did manage to remain well off, even if on a reduced scale. All this showed that something was basically wrong, and attention naturally became directed to other coun-

tries where entirely new systems were being tried out. British socialism became international in outlook.

Class warfare is the means by which the followers of Marx seek to promote social change. Hence in England the Labour Movement has produced a widening rift between the working classes on the one hand and the governing and capitalist classes on the other. No one of whatever class who has spent the best years of his life abroad can expect to fit in very well when he returns to the home country. But more than others the Indian civil servant usually failed to make a good impression. He retains the feeling of superiority that came so naturally in Poona, and his ideas are those of an earlier and more leisured generation. The working class in particular fails to appreciate how he has come to deserve such a very substantial pension. Since he not unnaturally gravitates toward his own kind, the superannuated Indian civil servant is inclined to retire to some coterie in Devonshire, and this is rather unfairly taken for snobbishness. But he may find himself attracted by the advertising of the South African agencies who point out the excellent climate and low income tax and the fact that all immigration formalities are waived for those in possession of an assured pension. That some people can so effectively escape the rigors of the English winter in their old age, after a life of "ease" in some tropic paradise, is resented by those who will never know any relaxation more exotic than a week in the summer at Blackpool.

But the real spleen of the British workers seems to be vented not on the small governing class and the few sur-

viving really wealthy capitalists, but on the very numerous *rentier* class, whose members are everywhere in evidence in England. Annoyingly, they still seem to live in comfort and idleness despite increased taxation and reduced incomes from their shares in tropical plantations. The lengths to which this regrettable domestic feeling can go, and the heat that has been engendered, seem to be reflected in the following letter in the London *Sunday Times* of July 26, 1942, from a writer using the pen name of Jus:

"Sir: It is said that the Minister of Labour, Mr. Ernest Bevin, welcomes the loss of Britain's overseas investments, because it will mean the disappearance of the 'rentier' people and turn us into a 'nation at work.' Does Mr. Bevin not know that investment is from saving?

"The loss of Britain's very large investments in rubber and tin and oil in the Far East is a matter of the utmost seriousness to the conduct of the war, however Mr. Bevin for purely political purposes may pretend to whitewash it. Other overseas investments have also been lost which must adversely affect the war effort in some degree.

"Further, those investments represent the savings not of any particular class, but of the general public, most of whom, if they live long enough, will be 'rentier' people. Whether they be Ministers of the Crown, trade union secretaries, officials or semiofficials, they will almost certainly some day draw pensions derived from 'interest' and be just as much 'rentier' people as ordinary people who have to live on their hard-earned savings."

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So here we have evidence of a house seriously divided against itself, in such manner as could only tend to weaken Britain's hold on her colonies. In its practical effect we have only to recall that it was under a Socialist government that, at a critical juncture, work was halted on the Singapore naval base.

Yet there are, of course, British socialist leaders and intellectuals who rise above class hatred. Like other thinkers they now are more interested in fighting for an ideology, democracy to wit, than for selfish material interests. So far as imperialism is concerned, the editor of the *New Statesman and Nation* states clearly the widely held attitude of the intelligent Left when he writes on August 1, 1942, "We have always regarded the future of India and the Dependent Empire as international and not as British domestic problems." From which one might deduce that when General Alexander tells us, "Of course, we shall take Burma back; it's part of the British Empire," there might be more enthusiasm on the part of British workers, who recall the three Anglo-Burmese wars, if the reason given had been slightly different—had it been said, for example, that it would be a necessary step toward bringing aid to China and defeat to the Axis.

A distinguished spokesman of the English extreme Left, Julian Huxley, expressed his views on colonies in the September, 1942, issue of *Free World* as follows:

"The world is changing under our eyes. . . . In such a confusion of change the colonies are bound to be in-

volved. The world's conscience is beginning to grow a little uneasy over the fact of one country 'possessing' another as a colony, just as it grew uneasy a century or so ago over the fact of one human being possessing another as a slave. The inter-war disputation between the 'have' and the 'have-not' powers is wearing a bit thin. To discuss colonies in those terms is to regard them exclusively from the point of view of the advanced powers, as so many pieces conferring prestige or wealth or strategic advantage in the game of power politics. It is beginning to dawn on us that the real 'have-nots' are the colonial peoples themselves, struggling along in a morass of economic backwardness, a darkness of ignorance, a purgatory of ill-health, from which it has taken the Western world nearly two millennia to emerge, onto its present level of relative civilization.

"The mercantilist view of colonies as milch-cows to be exploited for the benefit of the metropolitan power, when looked at firmly in the light of post-depression economics, is seen to be as shortsighted as it was selfish. Not merely to provide a moral basis for their dependent empires but to increase general prosperity, the standard of living of the native colonial peoples must imperatively be raised. The principle of trusteeship sounded rather noble when applied to mandates in 1919; but now, even if it were adopted for all colonies, it would look inadequate. Positive aid is required, and the only possible substitute for imperialism is seen to be the development—political and social as well as economic—of the areas now classed as colonies. What is more, the development must be undertaken internationally. The separate possession of colonies was an in-

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evitable extension of the game of power politics as played by independent sovereign states; whatever international framework is superposed upon nationalism after the war, it must concern itself with the colonies as well as with the advanced nations on which the colonies depend.

“The future of the native peoples, not the satisfaction of the claims of European powers to prestige or to rights of exploitation, should be the primary objective.”

Apart from such advanced Leftist thought, there is no doubt that the great mass of English people are giving serious consideration to the future of the Empire and that this is on novel lines. According to a recent editorial in *The Economist*, since the fall of Singapore and since the spotlight has been directed upon India there has been “something approaching a revolution in the attitude toward the colonies, both in and out of Parliament.” Though it is generally agreed that territories vital to the United Nations must continue to be occupied during the war, there is strong feeling in favor of welcoming India as early as possible to the British Commonwealth as a free and self-governing dominion.

So far as the Crown colonies are concerned, the British middle class, used to taking the colonies for granted, is also becoming more articulate. Writing in the November, 1942, issue of *Asia*, Mr. Ernest T. Nash, an Englishman who served for twenty-five years with the Shanghai Municipal Council and is now attached to the British Overseas Press Service in New York, gives us an outline of current British views in an interesting article entitled



"Englishmen Have New Ideas about the Colonies." He tells us that many entertain thoughts of a "colonial charter," a joint economic collaboration and conception of citizenship, as an improvement on the policy of "trusteeship for the native" (something similar to which seems to be conceived by the Dutch government-in-exile for their empire). This is in recognition of the fact that the colonial peoples want no more "paternalism." There should be, many think, a new type of administrator more in touch with popular requirements; attacks are being made on the continuation of indirect rule by princes who are out of touch with popular movements, and even on the using of a country like Malaya primarily for the exploitation of its products. Some are in favor of the granting of capital for the expansion of local industries with the removal, so far as possible, of checks and controls liable to cause friction. For all this, according to Mr. Nash, the average Englishman is strongly of the opinion that despite past mistakes he has a role to play in regard to the future of "his" colonies, and he intends to continue to play this part—just as a "friend." He is not prepared, therefore, to go so far as the Left with its international proposals. And while a sharp watch is kept on American reactions, I may add, there still seems to be no real appreciation in any school of thought that what the Asiatics themselves will be prepared to tolerate in the future is a factor that has to be taken increasingly into consideration.

The American attitude toward imperialism has much in common with liberal British thought. A development of the movement of counter-colonization that began with

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American independence, in its modern form the American viewpoint takes as its basis President Wilson's Fourteen Points. These have exerted a powerful influence on the growth of nationalism in the Asiatic dependencies during the last twenty years. President Wilson, if unconsciously, was a disciple of Cobden and Bright. Without selfish ends himself he rejected the claim of imperialists that an imposed pax and good government were a justifiable substitute for freedom. Ultimately, if not immediately, he wanted freedom and equality for all; and he saw in the unequal division of colonies the germ of future war.

President Wilson was an idealist who did not care to go too deeply into the practical details of the working of the reforms he advocated. He has been followed by many writers and thinkers who have balked at going into the intricacies of the problems involved. On India, in particular, at least until recently, much of American public opinion has remained prejudiced and misinformed. It had long refused to grapple with the complexities of the situation resulting from religious differences, minorities, and treaty obligations, just as the British, for their part, have sometimes tended to magnify these difficulties. But in general American criticism has been sincere and therefore influential in hastening the ultimate freedom of the subject peoples.

Only when American opinion, in certain quarters, becomes biased and tinged with a regrettable anti-British sentiment, sometimes tainted by the effects of Axis propaganda, is it certain to fail. Then it throws together Britons of every shade of political opinion in a common determi-

nation not to tolerate external interference. It tends to widen the gap between American and British liberal opinion which is otherwise advancing toward a common understanding. Indeed, one might say that it has a retarding effect on the ultimate advent of freedom for the subject peoples that is exactly comparable to the effect on it of the inability of the Moslems and Hindus to agree in India, and of the dislike of immigrant Asiatics by the natives of most Asiatic countries.

To sum up then, public opinion may be said to have weakened the hold of imperialism in two ways: Firstly, there has been a failure to agree internationally on a common defense policy, while in Britain there has been a division of opinion on a class basis and a tendency when socialism was in power to neglect imperial defense. Secondly, there is a growing feeling, much of it disinterested, in Britain as in America, that it is time for the present system to be superseded by one more in harmony with the Four Freedoms for which we are fighting. At the same time, one must not ignore the fact that a very influential school of thought sees the best hope for lasting peace in Anglo-American world domination.

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### DUTCH FOOL'S PARADISE

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MY LAST visit to Java happened to coincide with Hitler's invasion of Holland. Germans, aided by Dutch fifth columnists, had installed secret machine guns in corner shops and had planned to seize key buildings on the appointed day and thus obtain control of the colonies. But Hitler changed his timetable and let down his accomplices. The Indies authorities had warning and acted swiftly. I saw apparently respectable citizens arrested in their comfortable colonial homes on irrefutable charges. Expeditiously they were escorted, together with the Germans, aboard a specially chartered steamer and sent to the remotest part of Achin in North Sumatra. There a large camp had been prepared for them in a healthy valley—entirely surrounded by miles of tiger-infested jungle. But it had been touch and go. And for the first time the shaping of their own policy—at least for the moment—lay in the colonists' own hands.

For three hundred years Holland had been waxing rich from the wealth of the Indies. From rubber, oil, tin, quinine, and other tropical products the Dutch derived an-

nually a direct profit of something like a hundred million dollars (U.S.) plus a further amount of half that sum indirectly. Holland had no other colonies of any great value, and her status as an European power depended on what she made out of the Indies. Yet what steps did she take to guard these vital riches which she could not but see were so eagerly coveted by those less generously endowed? Perhaps, like so many other European states during the years following the last war, she tried hard to believe that the world was tired of fighting. Perhaps, again like others, she underestimated the intentions and strength of Japan. So she did her best to keep quiet and offend nobody, feeling that in the last analysis she could rely on Singapore and the British Navy. That was a fine frame of mind for men of the same stock as the audacious seamen who in the seventeenth century had sailed with van Tromp up the Thames with a broomstick at their masthead!

An almost complete neglect of defense precautions over a long period of years, that might have been excusable in the case of Portuguese Timor, could scarcely be justified on the part of a wealthy nation. Especially was this the case since the extent of her material resources was paraded before the envious eyes of the Singapore British on whose navy the Dutch government was so obviously relying for the protection of its vast colonial interests. While British companies had to continue to run out-of-date passenger ships, the Dutch maintained ever more luxurious connections with their mother country. The new Dutch liners, outstanding for food and service, made a strong appeal, even in their second class, to homeward-bound Malayan

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planters, owing to the excellent family accommodation they offered. No less were the Dutch the pioneers in the establishment of air services from Europe to the Far East. At a time when other European lines were infrequent and undependable the Dutch operated regular services. The highly developed internal air services and the numerous fleet of comfortable interisland steamers, of which I have spoken in a previous chapter, bear witness to the fact that huge funds must have been devoted to these ends, some of which one might have thought could have been devoted to defense preparations.

Now that with Holland's fall responsibility for the fate of the Indies for the first time rested squarely on the shoulders of the colonial government, it awoke to the imminence of the Japanese threat. No more lacking in personal bravery and a readiness to do what they could than were the planters of Malaya, it was with a new and grim determination that corpulent planters and merchants hastened to don the greenish uniform of the *landsturm*. As one Dutchman put it to me, voicing the new fear that perhaps Japan might attack the Dutch Indies before a British fleet could get to Singapore, "If only they give us a few months we can buy the weapons needed for our defense, now that we do not have to send our wealth to Holland." But he had forgotten that the arms-manufacturing countries, themselves either at war or drawing near to the vortex, needed almost all they could produce. The eighteen months given the Indies to set their house in order proved all too short.

As elsewhere, Japan's resort to arms merely climaxed

the gradual process of the decay of white rule in Asia. So we may now enquire more closely into the nature of the Dutch colonial policy which, despite the many excellent features that characterized its later attitude toward the natives, led none the less surely to Dutch involvement in the general decline of the white man's fortune in Asia. It need hardly be prefaced that, as with the British and French, the primary object of the Dutch in the Indies was trade and commercial exploitation. In the vigorous days of the Dutch East India Company (1602-1798) this was indeed the only object, and rule was corrupt and indirect, through the medium of the native sultans. The rough self-seeking Dutchmen of those days lived in a world in which no pretense was needed that they were there for the good of the natives or desired to concern themselves with any irrelevant details of their domestic affairs; and there was little change in this outlook even under the Crown until late in the nineteenth century.

In fact, toward the middle of the nineteenth century what was known as the Culture System had been openly designed to drain as much wealth as possible from the country by the forced cultivation of export crops. It cannot be described as a cruel system, for its worst feature was the neglect of social development of the people. Indeed, that basic living conditions could not have been in any way onerous is sufficiently indicated by the enormous increase in the population of Java from five to thirty millions during the nineteenth century. Yet a bitter feeling dating from this period was to leave a legacy of political

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trouble for the Dutch long after the Culture System had been abandoned.

In 1900 there were introduced two great improvements in Dutch colonial policy which were nevertheless indications of a growing weakness which was ultimately to bring about the decay of Dutch rule. These improvements were the replacement of the Culture System by the so-called Ethical Policy and the opening of the Indies to free trade and private enterprise. They were signs of weakness simply because they had been dictated by the necessity of keeping the great powers contented and without cause to intervene.

The abolition of monopoly had no great effect on the natives, for it meant merely the increased exploitation of the raw-material wealth of the Indies, including the making of a beginning in Sumatra and the flow of wealth to Holland through private, rather than through government, channels. As a result it served both to increase the number of white colonists in the employ of the many new corporations that were established, and to open the way for the Japanese wedge of commercial penetration. Soon a Japanese vanguard some 7,000 strong were firmly established in the islands. Their investments were not large, but as traders they were able to flood the islands with cheap manufactures in which the natives delighted.

It was the Ethical Policy, encouraged by liberal public opinion at home, that brought a new era for the natives. Its implementation involved a scientific study of native culture, albeit from an objective point of view, for only



with knowledge could the problems connected with bettering the native lot be solved. Yet it would be absurd to describe the Ethical Policy as purely disinterested. Just as in restoring so methodically the magnificent Hindu remains the government had one eye on the growing tourist trade, so it believed that the raising of the native living standard would serve a double purpose. It would fulfill the philanthropic mission demanded by home and world opinion and at the same time would make the islands a better market for Dutch manufacturers who were more and more desperately in need of an outlet in the islands.

The great depression of the 1930's hit the Indies harder than any other Asiatic region. They were entirely dependent on the export of raw materials for which a renewed demand was to await world rearmament. It was particularly unfortunate that at that time the Dutch efforts to raise the native living standards were just at their most critical experimental stage. The Dutch did their best to relieve the hardships of the people during this difficult period by encouraging the growth of more varied food products for local consumption. They showed their real genius for colonization in the resettlement of large blocks of the Javanese population in sparsely peopled Sumatra. But a tardy introduction of industrialization was too late to relieve Indonesian bitterness at its long delay. For many city natives living on borderline incomes, reabsorption in village life alone provided an escape from destitution.

One effect of the depression and the failure of the Ethical Policy was particularly significant. The deterioration of the yen increased the influx of cheap Japanese wares in

answer to the native demand. In order to prevent Japanese domination of the markets and the ruin of the economic system both of the Indies and of Holland, which were so closely bound together, quotas on imports had to be fixed. And so, at the risk of antagonizing Japan, the open-door policy that had been previously adopted entirely for the political reason of keeping the great powers contented had to be abandoned. Not only did it antagonize Japan but it antagonized the natives by raising the cost of living, for it deprived them of the one way of obtaining Western-type goods, which the Dutch had taught them to want, at a price they could pay.

If the Dutch felt that in their blind reliance on the protection of others they could afford to flout the Japanese in the matter of trade, they were soon to become painfully aware that Japan's ambitions were not to be restricted to the kind of penetration that could be controlled by tariffs and such devices. She could capitalize the difficulty with which the Dutch had finally brought Sumatra under effective control after the long drawn-out Achin war. Now Japanese eyes were on the great empty spaces of Borneo and New Guinea over whose native rulers the Dutch claimed a shadowy suzerainty but which islands they had largely failed to develop. Condescendingly the Dutch referred to these great island territories as the "outer possessions," and regarded an administrative post in one of them as almost the equivalent of banishment. During the critical months before Pearl Harbor the Japanese coupled with their demands for oil ever more insistent requests for the right to colonize New Guinea.

The means by which the Dutch had sought to raise the

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living standards of the Indonesians, in accordance with their Ethical Policy, had been education, previously neglected, and close attention to native welfare. But even their best motives were suspect in the eyes of the natives, who could not for a moment be expected to forget the selfishness that had animated the Culture System, when the natives were forced to grow export crops which they had to sell to the Dutch at fixed prices. The new paternalism carried to extremes irritated the natives, who saw no reason for their children to go to school when they were wanted at home to help on the farms, and it was clear that their only future lay on the land. At one time so all pervading was this well-meant control of native life that if a Javanese peasant desired to cut a stick of bamboo he could only do so with expert guidance and after having obtained a permit from the district officer.

The effects of Western education, on those more capable of absorbing it than were the generality of peasants, produced as elsewhere in Asia a desire for genuine participation in the government of the islands. In particular, the intelligentsia began to realize that Dutch paternalism ran counter to the accepted principle of indirect rule by which, so far as possible, European officials had agreed to remain in the background. It further led them to believe that the democratic principles of self-government the Dutch were gradually introducing were nothing but an elaborate mockery.

The net result of both these political and economic developments was to drive the educated Indonesians, mostly confined to the island of Java, toward nationalism, with

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which, as a direct outcome of their liberal policy, they had increasingly to wrestle since 1900. Nor was the example of Japan's progress lost on the Indies any more than it was on other parts of Asia. The first symptoms of unrest showed themselves in the religious field with the changing of the Moslem attitude toward the Christian missionaries. Then came communism with revolutionary uprisings in the 1920's; but these were quite easily suppressed, for the Javanese leaders were sadly lacking in the courage of their convictions. The amenability of the Javanese to a small show of force was one of the considerations which seemed to absolve the Dutch government from maintaining a strong army in the Indies. The Indonesian nationalists, though having in common a dissatisfaction with the government's reforms and a desire to be free, are handicapped like the Burmans and Indians by disunity and a multiplicity of parties. Some have had recourse to noncooperation on the Indian model. At least one party, reaching the more advanced stage that follows the mastery of Western material methods, has sought strength in a revival of traditional culture.

In 1918 the growth of the nationalist movement had been met by the Dutch with the creation of a semiparliamentary body called the Volksraad, which has witnessed many stormy scenes and violent attacks on the government. The various parties were represented in it on a partly electoral basis in accordance with their racial groups, though the government remained bureaucratic and centralized. The opportunities it afforded for free speech and a voice in the administration acted as a safety

valve, but legislation remained in the hands of the governor general, usually acting on the advice of a council but ultimately reflecting the wishes of Holland. It was in any case inconceivable that Dutch authority could be seriously threatened internally so long as they retained the support of the huge Eurasian community. In the next chapter I shall show how it was that the unexpected action of the Eurasians, coupled with the progressive Indonesianization of the administration, did eventually bring the internal situation to a crisis the effects of which were only postponed by the Japanese menace. Indeed, had the blow not fallen, it became clear after the invasion of Holland that the smoothness and efficiency with which the largely non-European administration continued to function could only lead to a definite demand for Indonesian independence at no distant date. When the Indies are freed it is very doubtful if the nationalists will be satisfied with "dominion status."

Though defense policy had been dictated by the Hague and only a very limited share of responsibility for the trend taken by the Indies administration really rested with the colonial government, nevertheless the acquiescence of the Dutch colonists and people as a whole, as with the British in their colonial policy, is implied. Thus we must now look into the character of the twentieth-century colonial life which came to acquiesce in a policy that could only tend to weaken the Dutch grip on their empire.

I have said that the effect of the opening of the commerce of the Indies to private commercial enterprise was that money came to flow through private rather than gov-

ernment channels. This meant added incentive for Dutchmen to come out to the Indies with the object of settling permanently. They came more in the spirit of settlers, in marked contrast to the attitude of mind that actuated British and French "contract" men. The improvement of communications made possible the opening up of the healthy interior highlands for the planting of coffee and cinchona. Conditions here were suited to white women, so that intermarriage with the natives ceased and life could go on pretty much as in Holland. Even planters from the lowlands could dispense very largely with leaves to Europe by taking vacations on the plateaus. Away from the teeming coastal plains it was easy to begin to lose touch with the people and forget that danger lurked ahead.

Leaving it to his government to satisfy the growing demands of the Indonesians, giving way where necessary for the sake of peace and quiet, the average Hollander in Java busied himself almost exclusively with his own affairs. This boiled down to the building up of a comfortable home life that was easier of attainment here than in Holland. Solid comfort and financial security were the goal, and beyond that a natural stolidity did not encourage imagination. And of course such a frame of mind rendered unnecessary the artificiality, the lavish display, and high living with which the British in Malaya or the French in Indo-China tried to make bearable a life that they considered exile.

The casual globe trotter must find it hard to assess the spirit of the Dutch colonial life, for cities like Batavia and Surabaya are necessarily somewhat international in com-

plexion. The Hotel des Indes, catering primarily for tourists, would tend, for example, by its overemphasis of the ceremonial side to make one think that *rijstafel* could scarcely be the everyday occurrence in the life of the Hollander that it frequently is. Were the visitor invited to a colonial home he would find that a no less massive *rijstafel*, though confined to a reasonably small selection of dishes which the good housewife is careful to vary from day to day, is the normal mid-day fare. And if the Dutchman habitually eats to repletion he is just as careful to see that it does not interfere with his commercial activities as is the Saigon Frenchman to see that nothing interferes with his night life. For both, with their different objects in view, are strong believers in the afternoon siesta. The Dutchman invariably lounges in his pajamas on his verandah through the hot afternoon hours. Then he opens up his office for a couple of hours just when the mad Englishman would be intent on devoting his pent-up energies to the pursuit of a ball.

It was easier to appreciate the extent to which the Dutch had settled themselves in make-believe security if one spent a little time in the interior highlands of Java, where one was away from both the cosmopolitan influences and the swarming natives of the lower country. Bandung, the capital of the interior plateau of Java, was a thoroughly modern city, with power supplied by near-by waterfalls, clean well-kept streets, and many high-class stores. The display of extravagant luxury so common in European cities in the East was absent. The unruffled peace of mind, the smooth comfort of a colonial life from

which all pioneer difficulties had been methodically expunged and which could but be softening in cumulative effect, was somehow combined with an innate Dutch frugality which manifested itself in unexpected ways. There was, for instance, the ubiquitous bicycle. As in Holland, it was retained as the most popular mode of transportation, even in peacetime and in a land where oil and rubber shortages could scarcely have been visualized even as the remotest possibility. But nowhere was the difference between Java and the British or French colonies more striking than in the social life of the clubs.

Club life in Java came almost as a shock to my wife and me on the first occasion that we were invited by Mr. de Witt, manager of a large business house, to spend the evening attending a concert at the fine Bandung Club. It turned out to be very much of a family affair. Not only did Mr. de Witt, as we had expected, bring his buxom wife and sturdy flaxen-haired daughters, but every other worthy Bandung citizen seemed to have brought his family. The very presence of so many young people was in itself a great distinction from the British or French colonies where climate and poor educational facilities combined to make necessary the separation of children from their parents. The various families bowed ceremoniously to one another as they walked to their respective tables in the club. There was no tendency to intermingle and form huge parties around the tables hastily drawn together by the attendant "boys" as there would have been in Malaya, no movement toward segregation of the sexes—the men to talk rubber (at first) and the women to gossip.



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It was clearly to be a most sedate affair, and for two solid hours the families sat and sipped their cups of coffee or soft drinks. Rarely did a boy have to dart forward to replenish a glass. Even those men who drank anything stronger seemed to confine themselves religiously to just two glasses of that excellent Bokma gin, which for some inexplicable reason warns the consumer on its label to "take two only." If conversation flagged and faces were expressionless, this was no doubt to be attributed to a sublime appreciation of the really good music as much as to a feeling of contented satisfaction that all was well with the world.

To me it all seemed a little strange, and I remember asking Mr. de Witt what other forms of recreation were popular with the Hollanders. After a moment's hesitation a smile of comprehension dawned on his honest countenance as he replied "Ah, you mean games? No we don't play any games at all. That is what makes it so difficult for Englishmen living in Java to share our social life as we should like them to do. Besides music, our chief relaxation is reading." This, I think, is an illuminating sidelight on the great difference in temperament between the Dutch and British in the East that made close cooperation difficult until they were finally compelled to fight shoulder to shoulder in a last-ditch stand.

As Mr. de Witt rightly said, the Hollander likes best to spend his leisure hours reclining in his pajamas with a good book. That is why there were so many bookstores in the cities of Java while Singapore could scarcely support one. The high educational standards of the Dutch

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left its mark on the colonists, and during a lifetime in Java a Hollander retains a strong interest in European literature and affairs. This no doubt effectively served to strengthen his bonds with the homeland in the realm of thought and thus lessened the estrangement that is apt to result from physical remoteness. Unfortunately, it could also make him tend to overlook the perils that hovered near by.

There is beautiful hill country around Bandung, and it was on a later occasion that, in accordance with the friendly counsel of Mr. de Witt, we decided to spend a quiet vacation at Pengalengan. Here the higher elevation and rural surroundings made possible a closer approximation to provincial Holland. Pengalengan proved to be a delightful little Dutch village set among cinchona estates and rolling meadows. The latter were well stocked with herds of Frisian cows, so that nothing but a windmill was lacking from the landscape. Certainly the village was completely Dutch with its white-painted church, its single street with a few small stores, and, scattered all around, the neat bungalows of the Hollanders. Either they had sought retirement in this little Holland of the hills, or else they were carrying on a profitable trade in market garden produce, fresh green vegetables, tree tomatoes, and passion fruit for the supply of Batavia and Singapore. It was a curious sight for the tropics to see old people, perhaps retired from Surabaya commercial houses a quarter of a century earlier, pottering about in their gardens like superannuated British colonials in Devonshire.

It was pleasant indeed, if insipid and colorless, this life

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of the modern Dutch residents in Java, who had seemingly got everything just as they wanted it. But surely the hardy old seafarers and merchants who had built up the empire, and might have kept it, were made of sterner stuff. Yes, even had I not read of their exploits I should be sure that they were, for have I not seen them with my own eyes both in the flesh and carved in stone? More than this, I know just what impression the old Dutchmen made on the natives in the days before they had dared to treat the white masters and their new-fangled liberal policy with contemptuous disdain. And the lesson in contrasts of the white man as he was once in the native eye and the low esteem in which Asia holds him since he lost face is one that certainly does not apply to the Dutch alone.

First let me take the seventeenth- or eighteenth-century Dutchman as he survives for posterity in stone and—what is more important—as he appeared to contemporary Asiatic eyes. There are two such figures, larger than life size, and they stand one on each side of the entrance to a Buddhist temple in Bangkok. Each is a fierce-looking Hollander indeed. He wears a chimney-pot hat, great square beard, full-skirted coat, and knee breeches. He brandishes a heavy club which indicates that he would stand no nonsense. These figures correspond to the usual mythological giant gate guardians intended to scare spirits away from the sacred enclosure. So in native opinion of those days it seems that there was little enough to choose between a demon and a Dutchman when it came to keeping off intruders. In fact, if only one could manage to catch and

tame them in stone, the Dutchmen may even have been the more effective.

Then there was that last living survival of the old-type Dutchman, none other than the late Professor van Stein Callenfels. Not only was he the one personality I ever met in the Indies, but he was also quite the most astounding white man left in the East during these last decades of decline. It is therefore strange that the news correspondents, so insatiable in their quest for interviews with so-called "personalities," should have missed the outstanding example in a region where personalities were as rare as the dodo's egg. Perhaps it was that they missed his significance in the changing world order. Or perhaps they had been warned that Callenfels, like Professor Challenger of *Lost World* fame, liked to handle his own publicity. Indeed, he would hurl a newspaperman from his verandah with as little regard for life and limb as had Challenger when he flung an uninvited reporter down the stairs of his London apartment.

For those who have made the acquaintance of Challenger, as portrayed by the pen of Conan Doyle, any description of Callenfels would be superfluous, for those two great men of science were as like as two peas. Let it merely be said that he was a very giant of a man, strong and heavily built, for he tipped the scales at precisely 330 pounds. His fine domed cranium was thatched with long and matted, curly black hair, his large eyes peered from beneath insolent bushy eyebrows, and his great spade-shaped beard bristled with vital energy. In a word, his

expression, especially in his attitude to his colleagues, was most commonly one of overbearing and arrogant intolerance. Yet, like Challenger, he could dissolve in a moment into an elephantine geniality that was no less overwhelming, and this usually occurred as soon as he found himself the center of an admiring audience.

Professor Callenfels was a prehistorian, and as such in this modern age of materialistic endeavor his significance might well have been missed, even in the island that gave the world the Java Ape Man. But if in the common view Callenfels, again like Conan Doyle's hero, had missed his millennium (and one could more easily have pictured him as dressed in woad before his cave mouth, a stone ax in his hand, than in pajamaed ease on a colonial verandah), I think that in reality it was only his century that he had missed. I can see him yelling defiance and discharging his blunderbuss from the walls of Malacca fort at a charging mob of kris-waving, bloodthirsty Malay pirates; I can see him strutting the quarter-deck of a Company brigantine as he dares all comers to dispute Dutch ownership of the rich Islands of Spice; but I cannot, and what is more no one ever did, see him sipping lemonade at a concert in the Bandung Club.

Without exception, Callenfels was the hardest drinker in the East. There was none of the "take two only" about Callenfels' consumption of gin. It was when on a visit to Singapore that seated among a huge circle of gullible admirers one might see him at his best. While openmouthed they absorbed every word of his fantastic stories about the progress of the Melanesoid Man down the Peninsula (that

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was before anyone thought the Japanese would emulate their prehistoric example), Callenfels would lower the contents of several tankards to every stengah imbibed by his listeners. Each pint had a curious way of disappearing down his cavernous gullet at a single gulp, while woe betide the Chinese boy who was not immediately at hand with another. Yet this indulgence never seemed to have the slightest effect on Callenfels' mental acumen, even though few dared to put it to the test. Nor did it impair his ability to cope with the largest *rijstafel* ever a Dutchman had set before him.

Some years ago, before the Professor's capacity was so widely known as it afterwards became, he was invited by the French Indo-China government to come to Hanoi for a month to advise them on prehistoric matters. Callenfels gladly agreed, only stipulating unlimited rice and beer. The French little knew what they were in for. When he had left, the government was presented by the hotel where he had stayed with the most colossal beer bill in history, and at a time when Indo-China's economic position was precarious to say the least. Naturally the government did not wish a slur to be cast on French hospitality, but it felt bound, in the interests of assuring that there had been no improper charges, to appoint a commission to inquire into the possibility, the mere physical possibility, of one man having drunk so much beer in so short a time.

Callenfels' voice was a lion's roar. Natives feared him, yet they loved him. When younger and lighter, he would march enormous distances and his men would follow him

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anywhere. But his appearance struck terror into the hearts of natives when they first saw him, and he was known throughout the Indies as Ravana, the mythological king of the giants. In later years he used to be carried about the countryside on a chair fastened on to bamboo poles and hoisted aloft on the shoulders of a dozen stalwart Javanese. It was on one such occasion that when visiting Celebes he arrived unexpectedly at a village. The fearsome apparition so terrified the people that with one accord they stampeded to the jungle and could not be brought back for several days.

With his strongly developed theatrical sense, the majority of Callenfels' casual listeners were unable to decide whether he was genius or charlatan. And in secret enjoyment of their doubt no one liked more than did he to tell a tale against himself. There were his excavations in Bali, for instance. He had found what he believed to be an ancient burial place, and with his devoted band of native workers was engaged in patiently disinterring the charred human remains. The men worked with their usual willingness as the Professor roared his instructions from some point of vantage. But at last one of the Balinese workmen could stand it no longer. "Stop, tuan," he cried. "You're digging up my grandfather."

It was in 1938 that I last saw Callenfels. It was at a gathering of prehistorians who were dining in an old Dutch *Stadthuis*. What a perfect setting for his last public appearance. I did not then know that this was to be the likeable old man's last fiery after-dinner speech, as with bristling mane the crass stupidity of his colleagues made him

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raise his voice till it reverberated among the old rafters as no human voice had done since some eighteenth-century Company banquet.

A few weeks later we heard that Callenfels was dead. He had been homeward bound to Holland, for of a sudden he had felt a longing for the land of his birth. But it was not to be. Seriously ill, he was taken ashore at Colombo where he died in hospital. When the news reached the Indonesians, none would believe that he was dead. That was impossible. Was not Ceylon the traditional home of the giants? Then the great white Ravana had merely gone home to reign among his kind. Be that as it may, there were many of us who felt that there was something missing from the East. The last living link was gone with those gruff old Dutch adventurers who had set 8,000,000 Europeans with a homeland of 13,000 square miles on the path toward an empire of 800,000 square miles and 65,000,000 subject Asiatics.



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THE EURASIANS' CHOICE

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THE VAST number of Eurasians that one sees in every Eastern country are a reminder that until comparatively recent years intermarriage was the rule rather than the exception. In fact, most governments winked at or even encouraged more or less open intermarriage with the natives as a means of ensuring the contentment of the white colonists with their by no means enviable lot. But while many governments could afford to ignore the Eurasians politically, in the Dutch Indies their position grew so strong and influential as to make their attitude a determining factor in the future of Dutch rule in the islands.

Before we come to this interesting Dutch colonial issue, it may be as well to glance at the whole Eurasian question throughout the East, noting first that the conditions which originated it have everywhere been long on the wane. In fact, with the coming of the twentieth century, public opinion, at least in British stations, condemned such practices; and at least one British government, that of Burma, forbade white officials to contract irregular alliances with native women. Though the color bar as known

to British and Americans did not exist in the French and Dutch colonies, the improvements which made these places habitable for white women also greatly reduced intermarriage.

The net result was, to borrow a political phrase, to drive the movement underground, and to compel men who had at all deeply involved themselves to live somewhat detached lives away from their fellow Europeans. The barefooted brown woman, clad only in a sarong, seeking to quiet the squeals of a half-caste youngster or two in a back room while an unexpected guest was entertained with *pahits* on a front verandah, became a feature confined to the more remote mines and plantations. It was probably most characteristic of the menage of the lone hand trying to scrape a living from a patch of sugar and coconuts on some distant island property. To go native had an unpleasant ring in the ears of polite club society, especially if it were British society. There was something beachcombery about it, although even a beachcomber might be a sound economist if he got "married" and settled down. There was old Smithers, for instance.

Retiring from the army in India with the rank of corporal, Smithers had elected to settle down near Tavoy on the Burma coast where he saw possibilities of a quiet and pleasant life. This was not assured by his humble pension, low even by his modest standards, nor had he any flair for commercial exploitation in the accepted sense. So he decided to marry, if not money, at least coconuts, rice fields, poultry, and pigs. In time he acquired Burman wives to the number of six, all very carefully selected on the basis

of dowry so that his worldly estate grew apace. From all accounts he certainly had personality which might have been better employed in smoothing the steadily worsening Anglo-Burman political relations. Perhaps that was what the governor had in mind when, on a tour by yacht down the coast, he shocked all the officials and their ladies at the garden party held in his honor, by asking if he might meet so worthy a citizen as old Smithers. The smartly dressed young aides hastened at the governor's bidding to the "estate" where Smithers sprawled on the verandah of his well-built teak bungalow flanked by the lesser attap-thatched shacks of his various wives and their families. Imagine their discomfiture to find at such short notice that though Smithers was wealthy in wives, livestock, and rice, his total wardrobe, hardly suitable for the occasion, consisted only of bright-colored sarongs.

I know only one locale in southeastern Asia where, right up to the time of the Japanese invasion, not only did mixed alliances still flourish but social life retained something of an informal character that must have obtained generally in the earlier days of British and Dutch colonization. It seems worth recording because it was the last survival of living conditions that may now have finally vanished from the East. And it affords some idea of a mode of life that must have been widespread, to account for the large Eurasian communities of today. I am referring to the somewhat idyllic life of the "teak wallahs" of Northern Siam and Burma, which it was difficult for white women to share, not so much on account of the climate but owing to the long periods during which the teak

wallahs, who comprised virtually the whole European community, were habitually absent in the jungle and could not have been accompanied by their wives.

In Northern Siam the great British teak corporations still retained vast concessions, the effort to eject them from these having formed one of the Siamese government's preoccupations of recent years. These corporations had their headquarters in Chiengmai and Lampang, quiet old walled cities each set in a valley of pale rice fields, a welcome break in thousands of square miles of wild mountainous jungle. In one or other of these towns the teak company's young English assistants had each a pleasant bungalow set in a garden compound gay with cannas, zinnias, African marigolds, and bougainvillaeas. But the teak wallah was not permitted to enjoy too much of such comfortable ease, for of necessity, like that of the mining prospector, his work demanded something of the pioneer from him. He had to go on tour for weeks at a time with a train of baggage elephants and native assistants, for it meant a long journey to visit the more distant parts of the company's concession.

On these tours he lived a frugal life, drinking little, sleeping in a tent, and walking miles through jungle paths every day. Since teak trees are shy of the company of their species and grow sparsely scattered in the jungle, the inspection of a hundred or so trees in a day involved covering a lot of ground. The object of the periodical inspection was to see which trees were mature enough to be "ringed." "Ringing" consists in cutting through the sapwood so that the tree will dry while it slowly dies. Only

dry timber will float, and when the tree is ready it is felled and then dragged through the forests by well-trained elephants to the nearest river. At flood time it is floated in huge rafts by easy stages down river to Bangkok (or Rangoon in the case of the Burma concessions), and it may be two or three years before it reaches the sawmills at the port.

Back from the jungle the teak wallah has two or three weeks of ease before him in his pleasant bungalow with little more to do than write a report for the Bangkok office before he sets out again. As virtually the only European society of the town was engaged in teak and not more than one or two other men were likely to be in from the jungle at the same time, regular club life was impossible. Moreover, the monotony has been found unbearable for a white wife condemned to remain the lone occupant of the bungalow for weeks on end. And a society composed almost entirely of lonely European wives would have created insoluble problems for the manager of the corporation. So he usually made it easy for the new arrival from England to acquire one of the slim Lao maidens—fair-skinned northern cousins of the Siamese—who was considered as suited to share the white man's life in these peculiar conditions as she was attractive to look upon.

It was against the rules of the Lao girl to accompany her "white lord" into the jungle. But in the bungalow, clad in her soft silk *sinn* (the Lao improvement on the sarong), her high-piled tresses decked with flowers, she fitted quite naturally into the long-tried scheme of things. She helped her husband master the intricacies of the Lao language

and ably looked after the Chinese servants, who were apt to get out of hand when the master was away. They did not resent her presence—for had she not a way of deftly smoothing over the bad tempers to which in this often trying climate all white lords were subject? And what set the seal on her position in this old-world society was the fact that at the tread of a visitor on the gravel path she did *not* hastily shuffle into a back room. When one paid a call on a Lampang teak wallah one went fully expecting to be received and made welcome by a cool and collected Lao girl, and if one knew the local etiquette one would be careful to address her as Mrs. Brown or Mrs. Jones as the case might be.

Well, that was one side of the picture. But the fate of the half-caste progeny has been the moralists' chief argument against the mixed marriage, and it cannot be denied that in general the lot of the Eurasian throughout the East has been a hard one. One has to think of the miserable descendants of the followers of Albuquerque, the founder of the Portuguese power in the East, still clinging to their religion and bearing the proud names of the Portuguese conquistadors, as a standing warning of the fate that probably awaits the Eurasian whenever denied the protection of a white government. Typical were the miserable "Portuguese" fishermen of Malacca, poorest of the poor, whom the British in recent years belatedly attempted to rehabilitate.

Yet under the British rule the Anglo-Indian Eurasians, of which there are a good number, have a far from enviable position. To the missionaries they are at once a problem

and a challenge; to the average European and Indian alike an object of contempt; to the government a helpless if troublesome "minority." While forever trying to approach the living standards of their white ancestors, they are in constant danger of slipping back to the level of the native mother and of reabsorption among the lower strata of native society. They find it hard to obtain employment on account of the Indian competition and the popular prejudice that they inherit the failings of both sides and not their better qualities. Nevertheless, certain government departments, notably the railroads and the telegraphs, absorb a good number of Eurasians, while others, as elsewhere in the East, fall naturally into such borderline occupations as auctioneers, undertakers, and confectioners. For fair Eurasian girls there was always employment in the large European stores, though their dark sisters were less fortunate. Withal there remained the perennial undercurrent of dissatisfaction, based on the desire for better opportunities in the administrative services, removal of one or other form of discrimination, and finally the demand to form a defense corps, all of which agitation received scant official encouragement. Despite this the Eurasians in India and the British colonies remained firmly attached to their traditional policy of loyalty to the European government. Too insignificant in numbers to count politically, their hope of survival was based purely on government protection.

In the Dutch Indies, on the contrary, the Eurasian problem came to assume ominous proportions in its bearing on the perpetuity of white rule in the islands. The im-

portance of the Indos, as the Eurasians of the Indies are called, arises in the first place from their numbers, which amount to 80 per cent of the total so-called Dutch population of 250,000. This was a direct result of the fact that the Dutch Government had for long not merely allowed but openly encouraged intermarriage. They felt that it was the best means of getting the Hollanders to settle permanently and to colonize the country effectively during the long period that Java remained unsuited to white women. They thought, too, that it would strengthen their position vis-à-vis the ever growing native population if they classed every Indo, however faint his degree of white blood, as Dutch.

Despite this official policy the lot of the Indos under the Dutch East India Company was not happy, since the Company's service was rigidly closed to them. It was hoped that they would form the nucleus for a native army, but such service was distasteful as tending to place them on a level with the native sepoy. And after all, being officially Dutchmen, it was hard to expect them to exhibit a love for military service no longer characteristic of the pure-bred Hollander.

After the Company's days the Indos' position improved despite the competition for clerkship on the part of the efficient Chinese immigrants. They succeeded in holding their own, as the nineteenth century drew to a close, largely owing to their better opportunities to obtain some Western education. They virtually monopolized the lower grades of the government service, and with the rapidly expanding European firms and private businesses the chances for employment in commerce improved. Individual merit



showed itself in the fact that, while the unsuccessful could still lapse back to native level in the villages, a proportion grew rich and influential and a small percentage could even retire to Holland, the great goal of their aspirations.

Unfortunately the year 1930 brought double disaster for the Indos as it did for the government. The depression coincided with the growing agitation on the part of educated Indonesians and Sino-Javanese half-castes for increased political power. In trying to satisfy the demands of the Indonesians for more administrative employment, and at the same time in view of the enforced reductions in the budget, the interests of the Indos were perhaps unavoidably sacrificed. By the middle 1930's the position of the community as a whole had become so precarious as to lead them openly to air their grievances and dissatisfaction.

This brought an entirely new, and for the government, serious situation. Previously the Indos had naturally been inclined to support the Hollanders at every point, in view of the circumstance that their ability to compete with Chinese and Indonesians had depended on European education and other assistance. In return, like the Europeans, they had been given an electoral representation out of all proportion to their numbers. On the other hand, with the cessation of intermarriage, the Indos had drifted apart from the Europeans and formed a distinct social community. Further, being classed as Dutch had its disadvantages. It put them under certain grave legal restrictions, notably in limiting their right to acquire land. Like the British in Malaya, the Dutch have been careful to safeguard the interest of the natives by refusing to allow them to sell their

## THE EURASIANS' CHOICE

essential agricultural lands to foreigners, as but for that the natives would soon be ousted from their rice properties by immigrants and money lenders. But this policy brought hardships to the Indos by preventing them in emergency from falling back to the simple rural mode of life of their Asiatic forebears.

As a result of these growing causes of friction the Indo-European Union, which had been founded in 1919 by the Indos mainly to forward educational and social ends, became more intensely political in character. It began to oppose the government in the hope of improving the Indos' position. And at the same time individual Indos in local municipal councils and provincial assemblies came increasingly to vote with the Indonesians. The movement finally came to a head in 1936 when the Indos' leader, de Hoog, threw the Volksraad into an uproar by leading a bitter attack on the government's policy. He then shocked European opinion by joining the Indonesian nationalists in demanding from the Crown dominion status for the Indies.

Thus the Indos had realized that their best chance for the future lay, not with the Hollanders, but in making common cause with the Indonesians for a free Indonesia. It became clear that the Dutch had lost the support of the bulwark they had so methodically built up with the object of bolstering their own position. Now that even the Indos had turned against them the ultimate withdrawal of the Hollanders from the Indies appeared inevitable, only the threat from Japan, recognized for years in their increasing trade infiltration, serving to postpone that day.

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### *OEUVRE CIVILISATRICE*

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“COULD YOU possibly come with me tomorrow? I’d much appreciate it if you both could. You see, the spot I have to inspect is very remote, and the attitude of the natives to us French officials at the moment is very uncertain. But if they see foreign visitors are with me I shall be safe from attack.”

It was early in 1933 that in these words and with an imploring look in his eyes a young Frenchman addressed my wife and myself as we sat on the verandah of his pleasant little bungalow, almost in the shadow of the famous ruins of Angkor in Cambodia. Incredible as such a request may sound, it is perhaps excusable in view of the fact that only a few days before, at the near-by administrative center, an official had been murdered in his bed. Indeed, even as we were talking there was a hue and cry after the murderers, who were believed to have escaped in the direction of Pnom-Penh. Evidently all was not well with the state of Denmark.

This particular visit to Angkor had climaxed a long tour we had made through Indo-China in the course of a scien-

tific mission of good will I had been asked to undertake on behalf of certain British learned societies to their opposite numbers in Indo-China. We had transhipped at Singapore and traveled up the long coast of Indo-China on an old steamer of the Messageries Maritimes, the *Angers*, a former German vessel, which I remember for its elaborately baroque interior decoration. On board we had seen at close quarters a good deal of the lesser French officials and their families, who made up most of the passengers. Everywhere there were glum faces and grumbling. This increased as the ship neared Haiphong, the port of Hanoï, which was our destination. The final touch came when, as a result of a radio message, a list appeared giving the various remote and presumably not very desirable stations to which the discontented and poorly paid officials were to be posted.

At Hanoï we were received with the usual French politeness. We were invited to lunch with Monsieur Pasquier, the then governor general, at his palatial state residence. It was a pleasant function. Monsieur Pasquier, so soon to meet his death in the tragic *Emeraude* air disaster, was a fine old bearded Frenchman, an excellent host and a lively raconteur. It happened to be the occasion of the annual meeting of the Grand Council of Indo-China, and our fellow guests included the distinguished Résidents Supérieurs of the various protectorates and the Governor of Kwang Chow Wan, the little French settlement on the China coast. In particular I remember this gentleman, for he sat next to me and confided that in his case it was ornithology that provided the means of escape from the

cares of state. And if these cares had filled the minds of all present, no shadow crossed a face during that splendid and quite Parisian luncheon. Indeed, but for the presence of liveried Annamite servants we might have been in France, an Imperial France that can never be again. One could almost have pictured Marie Antoinette as a fellow guest and, with problems to solve that were not perhaps so very remote from those that now troubled Monsieur Pasquier, she might here have made her famous remark concerning the value of cake as a substitute for bread.

Unrest was seething in the country at that time. If there was no mention of it at the luncheon, no attempt was made to conceal it in the newspapers and it was openly discussed on every lip. The dangers attendant upon work, even in my own peaceful sphere, in Indo-China soon became apparent when a brilliant young archaeologist was introduced to me at Hanoi, his head swathed in bandages. In an aside it was explained to me that he had come by the mishap in the course of an argument with one of his workmen who had suddenly reinforced words with an ancient but convenient brick.

Governor General Pasquier himself had recently survived the second attempt of the Nationalist Annamite Party to assassinate him. They had been more successful with Monsieur Bazin, head of the Labor Bureau, whose body had been found in a pool of blood. A note pinned to it showed that the party took particular pride in this achievement. It also led to the remarkable discovery that no less than half of the party's members were Annamite officials. The repressive measures that followed were se-

vere. The guillotine was working overtime. By the time I had traveled all the way down the long Mandarin Road, Indo-China's beautiful "*grande Corniche*," I was in a state of mind to take more philosophically the murder of another Frenchman, even in hitherto law-abiding Cambodia, than was the quaking young official at Angkor.

These events were symptomatic of a state of unrest that could scarcely be paralleled for bitterness in any British or Dutch possession. That it was a chronic state that had merely become unusually inflamed under the Pasquier regime, I knew from my previous visits to Indo-China in a purely private capacity. And before going any further it will be well to see what were the basic causes of France's failure to make a success of imperialism in the way that Britain and Holland undoubtedly did during the heyday of the system; why the French were unable to parry the inevitable advance of nationalism with the skill of the British; and why they were unable to put up a fight to protect Indo-China after the fall of the mother country in the same way that the heroic Dutch colonials did when left to their own devices in similar circumstances.

These basic causes, as I see them, are three in number: (1) The determination to make Indo-China a paying proposition, come what might, a belated intensification of the primary motive of all colonial activity. (2) The French variation of the "white man's burden" policy, constituting France's "*oeuvre civilisatrice*," which is particularly unfortunate as applied to Asiatics possessed of their own civilization; and so provocative of trouble that I have sought to emphasize its importance by making it

the heading of this chapter. (3) The temperamental unsuitability of the majority of Frenchmen for the colonial life. The last mentioned forms the subject of the next chapter. But the first two demand immediate consideration, for they sponsored the rise of a militant nationalism that so undermined the French power in Indo-China that it collapsed like a house of cards at the lightest tap from without.

Speaking first of the French economic policy, it must, in fairness to the French, be borne in mind that they were in Indo-China only seventy years. The greater part of the country had been won only after costly and lengthy campaigns. In fact, not until the present century could it be said that all of it had been brought under effective control. It was a great asset to French glory and it helped them to forget 1871, but it was not a naturally rich empire like the Dutch Indies. From the beginning its economic future was precarious. Much of the land was mountainous and jungle covered. To bring the vast flat area of Cochin China under rice cultivation, expensive irrigation schemes had to be put on foot, roads driven through the jungle, and malaria reduced. Even while the fighting was still in progress the French began work. They concentrated on the increase of rice production regardless of the threat of competition from Burma and Siam, both very anxious also to increase the output and quality of their grain. Rubber and coal were of only secondary importance. Of course, this development needed vast capital. To obtain it the government had been obliged to assure investors that it would pay dividends no matter what might befall. So it could

not allow such a misfortune as a world economic depression to interfere with its primary obligation to make Indo-China pay.

Thus when all the neighboring countries of southeastern Asia were forced off gold in the 1930's, Indo-China clung to the gold piaster. The unfortunate peasants were compelled to "produce in gold prices and sell in a silver market." Now the vast mass of Indo-Chinese peasants were entirely dependent on a good market for their rice, since in Indo-China even more than in any other European colony anything in the way of native industrialization was discouraged. Naturally the misery of the peasant cultivators became acute when the only market for Indo-China rice was France, since the piaster was linked to the franc. It finally became unbearable when this market also became practically closed to them as the result of the action of the French wheat growers. They succeeded in getting the government to enact tariffs and finally fix a quota limiting the import of Indo-Chinese rice to France. Yet whatever happened the revenue had to be collected. To this end Monsieur Pasquier adopted the most drastic methods of collection and inflicted heavy penalties on delinquents.

At the same time the French made Indo-China a closed preserve for the products of French manufacturers. This was a survival of the old monopoly system that the British and Dutch had long ago abandoned. Everywhere in Saigon, Pnom-Penh, and Hanoi the stores stocked only French wares. There was no going round the corner to look for very much the same sort of thing at a fraction of the price in a Japanese store. It was the only country in the East



where Japanese goods were completely excluded by a prohibitive tariff. That might not matter in the large cities where most of the customers were French or wealthy Chinese. But it hit the natives very hard for it was only by means of the low-priced Japanese goods that were elsewhere sweeping through the Orient that the Indo-Chinese could have satisfied their barest needs. But what could be done about it? Indo-China had to pay a dividend, that was axiomatic. Then the people must buy French goods or go without. Free trade, which the Dutch relinquished only when finally driven by necessity, was always out of the question in Indo-China.

Despite their lateness in the field, and their consuming necessity to concentrate on exploitation, in common with the other colonial powers the French did consider the introduction of a more liberal policy so soon as they had established their power. It was imbued by the liberal thinkers in France who, conscious of the greatness of their cultural heritage, felt unable to deny it to any people who became their protégés. They felt very strongly that they had a mission to civilize as well as to exploit. But unlike the less ambitious British and Dutch systems this French policy did not make any preparation whatever for the thing the natives really wanted—self-government. The French, profiting by the British experience, could see that home rule merely leads to a desire for independence. That, of course, would be quite incompatible with the fact that Indo-China was a French possession and must forever pay a dividend on French capital.

So the French, astutely enough, applied their policy of

assimilation. By virtue of this process the Indo-Chinese, like the natives of the other French colonies, were supposed to be prepared, not for progressive self-rule as Indo-Chinese, but for eventual French citizenship. Only there were two snags. The metamorphosis from French *sujet*, the birthright of the native of Indo-China, to French *citoyen*, which brought full rights to the enjoyment of *liberté, fraternité, égalité*, was terribly hard to achieve. Secondly, the French, on the false analogy of the ready acceptance of their superior culture by many European states, made the mistake of believing that it would be sincerely accepted without *arrière-pensée* by the Asiatics. We will now see how the idea worked out in practice.

Indo-China has five divisions, only one of which, Cochin China, is strictly speaking a colony, and it was there that the French first got their foothold in the Far East. The other four divisions, namely, Tonkin, Annam, Cambodia, and Laos, were known as protectorates. The last two, being the survivals of ancient kingdoms with small and racially distinct peoples, with a traditional culture derived from India, were wisely allowed to retain their identity and were governed by the so-called indirect method. Here the elaborate façade of court ceremonial and personal rule by the king and his mandarins gave the people the impression that their own rulers still held sway over them. The kings were safe too, or so they supposed, from their old enemies the Siamese.

In particular, the king of Cambodia was well pleased at being allowed to possess, like the king of Siam, a coveted white elephant and a many-tiered umbrella, both signs of

unfettered sovereignty. His nice new throne hall, with its inlaid silver floor and colored tiles, was very much better than anything he had possessed in the days of his independence. The world could scarcely have seemed brighter than when on that wondrous day in 1909, amid the most splendid pageantry, he once more took possession of the province that contained the ruins of Angkor, the royal seat of his half-legendary ancestors. It was indeed a triumph for which, without the help of his French benefactors, he could certainly never have hoped. All this went a long way to make up for the indignity of being put on a fixed salary by the French and seeing the mandarins each taking orders from some French administrative officer.

Though the French did their best not to obtrude unduly, there was less difference between direct and indirect rule in Indo-China than there was with the comparable institution as interpreted by the British and Dutch. That is why there were so many petty French "*fonctionnaires*" everywhere, whose places in a Dutch or British colony would be filled by natives. Nor did the French authorities, even while keeping in the background, ever let the Cambodians forget for one instant where the real power lay. I was struck by this in connection with the many religious festivals that were as conspicuous a part of the Cambodian court life at Pnom-Penh as they were in Siam under the old regime. It seemed to me a little incongruous for a purely Buddhist religious occasion to be introduced by a harangue which was intended to bring home to all present the indebtedness of the Cambodians to French protection.

So in Cambodia and Laos all went smoothly, or nearly

so. Only with the growth of Siamese nationalism did these western territories of Indo-China become pawns in the game of Japanese aggression and assume a strategic importance that was for the first time to put the value of French protection to the test. But Cambodia and Laos took no part in the growth of that nationalism which by its violence and insistence was to do so much to weaken France's ability to defend the eastern sections of Indo-China. These, on account of their vulnerability to Japanese attack, were of more vital strategic importance in the end.

This eastern region is peopled by the Annamites, who together make up four-fifths of the whole of Indo-China's population of twenty-three millions. Not only are the Annamites the most numerous but they form the most intelligent and articulate portion of the population. Perhaps for these very reasons the French, long after they had brought the whole country under effective control, kept it divided into the two protectorates of Tonkin and Annam and the colony of Cochin China. This looks like a particularly flagrant example of the policy of "divide and rule."

In the colony of Cochin China, with its big commercial centers of Saigon and Cholon, the latter being the great Chinese suburb with vast rice-milling interests, French direct rule is very much in evidence. Although the native population of the colony numbers four million, few have qualified for citizenship. Since only citizens have the vote, the deputy who represented Cochin China in the French Chamber of Deputies was elected mainly by Frenchmen.

In the protectorates the franchise was limited to officials and outstanding residents who could be depended on to support the regime. The unofficials in the councils so elected had no say in such matters as the collection of revenue. That would have been too risky. Many of the innumerable officials held positions that were virtually sinecures, found for them by influential relatives in Paris. Whatever the state of the country's finances, money had to be found to pay the salaries of redundant officials and therefore the budget was a matter in which no unofficial voice could be allowed to carry weight.

Another noteworthy difference from British and Dutch usage was the governor general's lack of special experience and training. He was usually a distinguished politician who had risen to prominence in Paris, without previous colonial service. It was precisely this impression that Monsieur Pasquier gave me when I met him in Hanoï. Despite his narrow escapes he was evidently still far from being in tune with Asiatic thought. Of course, had he been merely a figurehead the effect might not have been so serious. The weak point was that, despite his limited experience and knowledge of the East, the French governor general had in fact wider powers than did the corresponding British and Dutch officials. And he was by no means slow to use them. The Grand Council, which did so much to add luster to his position when it met annually at Hanoï, had only an advisory status.

The Annamite emperor retained nominal rule over Annam only, one of the three divisions of Indo-China peopled

by Annamites. The old Scholar Party, that preserved the traditional culture of Chinese origin, centered around the imperial court. It gave solace to the older generation and those of the intellectuals who had never been able entirely to adapt themselves to change. And anyone who has seen the punctiliousness with which the daily ceremonies of propitiation are still carried out in the precincts of the magnificent imperial tombs at Hué might hesitate to conclude that the old culture was other than very much alive. Perhaps as in other oriental countries it is only for practical purposes that it has been temporarily relegated to a secondary position in nationalist circles. Also as elsewhere it was not among the satellites of the court that were found those who were capable of availing themselves of Western methods for coping with Western masters.

Commercial exploitation, coming so soon after the conquest and coinciding with Japan's successes against Russia, certainly provided an ideal environment for the seeds of nationalist revolt to take root. But here, as in other European colonies in Asia, violence was postponed for a time while the younger Annamite intellectuals were busy acquainting themselves with the new Western learning that France was gladly making available to her protégés. In an effort to obtain their good will the liberal-minded governors general Beau and Sarraut, in the period prior to the First World War, encouraged French cultural studies. A university was founded at Hanoï and, as in other far eastern institutions of higher education, it was the study of the French Revolution that made a strong appeal to the

students. Here they had the distinct advantage of being instructed by those who were best able to expound the principles that had actuated the stormers of the Bastille.

If the French had desired protégés suited to imbibe revolutionary ideas and desirous of putting them into practice they could scarcely have chosen better than the quick-witted young Annamite intellectuals. It did not take them long to see that they were being denied in practice precisely the heritage for which the French themselves had fought, but were only prepared to share with the Indo-Chinese in theory. Like the Indonesians, though in a different way, they felt that their mentors were tricking them. In 1908 they staged an insurrection which was taken up throughout the country. The university was closed and the government recanted of its liberalism. The young rebel leaders were deported to the convict settlement of Pulo Condore, where I saw some of the survivors in 1925, together with a good many others who had joined them since.

The Asiatic Devil's Island of Pulo Condore, specially provided for Indo-Chinese conspirators and convicts, was a sort of French counterpart of the British Andaman Islands penitentiary. Perhaps I am the only Englishman who ever had the privilege of seeing the inside of this secluded institution where certainly visitors were far from being encouraged. Pulo Condore is a rock-bound island lying some seventy miles off Cap St. Jacques, and approachable only in fair weather. Moreover, the seas around the island team with sharks, a useful deterrent to those contemplating a getaway. I think it was through the good offices of the buxom proprietress of the Poussin Bleu, a once fashion-

able Bohemian haunt of Saigon, that I got permission to visit the island. The lady was a bosom friend of His Excellency the Governor of Cochin China, who, she said, and so indeed it proved in this instance, would refuse her no favors.

On arrival, either as a result of my bad French or from the unusual circumstances of my being allowed to go ashore from the French steamer, I found that I was thought to be a British official from the Andamans come to see how the French did things in their penal settlement. This so stimulated the pride of the French guards and jailers that they conducted me around with effusive politeness and most detailed explanations. I was shown, through the safety of substantial iron bars, all the star prisoners of the day. Though as seen through the grille they looked disappointingly docile, I was given to understand that, besides dangerous intellectuals, they included some of the most savagely ferocious of Annamite criminals and traitors. Some had only just escaped the gallows, I was told, while in other cases it was not yet decided whether they would be claimed by the guillotine or not. However, I saw nothing that could be described as actually oppressive in the treatment, at least of the main body of lifers who were kept busy on the island plantations. But it was evidently with the idea of impressing upon me the humaneness of the French penal system that I was informed that almost all were allowed to smoke. "Was that also the case in the Andamans?"

Whether all the treatment meted out in the privacy of Pulo Condore was as humane as was represented to me



I do not know. What is known is the fact that the lot of the free Annamites who went to France during the First World War to the number of a hundred thousand, nominally as volunteers but actually as forced labor, was far from all that could be desired. It was reliably reported that there was a fearful wailing and gnashing of teeth in the little country villages where the unwilling recruits were collected under military guard. Some jumped overboard from the transports in a frenzied effort to make good their escape.

I shall return to the damage this policy caused to French rule in Indo-China after noting that in the present war the French wisely chose the peaceful Malagasy of Madagascar for their labor corps. These are a people so docile and unwarlike that they put up no resistance to the initial French conquest of that great island. Nor did the French ever succeed in making good soldiers of them, though indeed such training is a double-edged sword, as the French found in Indo-China. Presumably the Malagasy experiment was more successful, or so it appeared from the remarks to me on the subject by the captain of a British transport on which not long ago I happened to be traveling round South Africa. It was as we drew near the great island that the captain came and leaned on the rail by my side.

"Soon after war broke out I carried a bunch of those Malagasy chaps to North Africa as a labor corps," he said. "We had five thousand of them on board."

"Five thousand?" I exclaimed, knowing that the ship could hold about 3,500 white troops.

"Yes, five thousand of them; they squeezed in every-

where. You never saw such a sight as eight of them in a cabin meant to hold four. Cabin closets seemed the favorite spots and the lucky guy who got the closet would creep in and curl up, just leaving the door slightly ajar."

"How did they compare with European troops?"

"Well, you'd be surprised how docile and clean they were. They didn't seem to need exercising or entertaining—an ideal cargo, in fact. But my, how they chattered."

The Indo-Chinese labor forces chattered too when they got back home in 1919, but not in the same frivolous sort of way. Theirs is not the light sunny disposition of the Malagasy, who resemble both in manner and appearance their cousins the Balinese. What the returning Indo-Chinese chattered about was what they had seen in France, and above all what they had succeeded in picking up of the French ideas that had been more or less suppressed in Indo-China along with the university. The leaders became fired with new ambitions and nationalism was revitalized. At the same time the general discontent that had been caused in homes throughout the country by the ruthless recruiting of the Annamites flared up anew with their return. It provided just the material on which the leaders could work. Quickly the situation worsened throughout the Annamite lands, with outbreaks and repression piling up in quick succession so that, as the fateful years of the twenties and thirties rolled away, the French regime was becoming progressively less able to show a brave front against external danger.

The Revolutionary Party of Young Annam revived the activities of the earlier leaders who had been placed in

duration at Pulo Condore. It began a programme of strikes and riots. At the same time a Nationalist Annamite Party, which sought to model itself on the Chinese Kuomintang, began work on similar lines in Tonkin. In both cases the main body of members were students, and I have already mentioned that political assassination ranked high on their agenda. However, the fact that the French had to deal with two mutually antagonistic nationalist parties in these Annamite protectorates instead of only one is a good example of the usefulness of a policy of divide and rule.

In Tonkin particularly, owing to the proximity of Chinese influence, the nationalist party was strongly tinged with communism from the beginning. Its leader, Nguyen-Ai-Quoc, had studied in Paris, Moscow, and later in Canton. It was there that the young Annamite communists used to gather for instruction; and there also that one of them took the opportunity of flinging a bomb at Governor General Merlin when he was on a visit to that city in 1924. His successor Monsieur Varenne, who was a socialist, at first encouraged the hopes of the communists. In a speech to the Grand Council in 1925 he announced that when France had accomplished her *oeuvre civilisatrice* in Indo-China "it may be believed that she will leave only the memory of her work; that she will no longer claim any role in the life of the peninsula, neither to direct nor even to counsel, and that the peoples who have profited by her tutelage will no longer have any ties with France other than those of gratitude and affection."

Views so much at variance with the fixed French policy of eventual assimilation, and which left no room for re-

nunciation, led to an immediate outcry on the part of the French conservatives. The French colonists in Indo-China were also up in arms over the issue. As a result Monsieur Varenne was obliged to modify his statement, a procedure that naturally incensed and disappointed the nationalists. Such a weak and vacillating exhibition prepared the way for the orgy of disorder that was to burst forth in full fury under the Pasquier regime.

After ceaseless propaganda the communists of Tonkin got the Annamite *tirailleurs* to mutiny in 1930 at Yenbay, the strategic point on the Red River where help could be expected from sympathizers in Chinese Yünnan. A number of French officers were killed and there were outbreaks of violence all the way to Cochin China. Under the "iron heel" policy which continued during the depression years and was still in force at the time of my visit to Hanoï in 1933, these outbreaks were suppressed with a ruthlessness about which even the French themselves felt uncomfortable. However, the "iron heel" was certainly effective in producing a superficial calm. The nationalist parties were broken up. Communism was driven underground. But the bitterness resulting from the repression and economic suffering remained to seethe beneath the surface like lava in a volcanic crater. It only awaited the appropriate moment when it would be able to overcome the pressure above and burst forth in eruption, destroying all in its path.

Though Annamite nationalism was hampered by the regionalism which was the direct outcome of the divide-and-rule policy of the French, it had one advantage over

similar movements in many parts of southeastern Asia. Its growth was less retarded by quarreling with the immigrant Asiatics. These immigrants are mainly Chinese, of whom there are half a million in Indo-China, mainly in the south where they do not tend to clash with the interests of the Cochin Chinese, who are mostly rice cultivators. Cholon, the Chinese commercial suburb of Saigon, testifies to the wealth of these Chinese whose presence, as in the other neighboring European colonies, has been encouraged by the French for their value as middlemen and rice millers. Nevertheless, the fortunes of Cholon fluctuate very much with the price of rice, and I remember visiting it during the depression when it seemed like a dead city. All the Chinese had packed up and gone home to await better times.

But the reason that there has been little friction between Annamites and Chinese is not just that the latter tend to congregate more in the south while those of the Annamites who are commercially minded are located mainly in Tonkin. As a matter of fact, the Annamites dislike the Chinese as much as do any Asiatic people who have failed to compete successfully with them, or who have been the victims of celestial moneylenders. But there is another factor involved, and that is the cultural one. The Annamites are indebted for their traditional civilization to the Chinese. The *oeuvre civilisatrice* has not been sufficient to cause them to forget this, as the Burmans have of late forgotten what India taught them. Unlike the Burmans, the Annamites have not drifted apart from their original civilizers to meet them again centuries later only when reintroduced

as exploiters under the aegis of their European masters. Until quite recent times the Indo-Chinese were accustomed to the guidance of their great neighbor, and they still respect and admire the Chinese even though they may dislike them individually. The traditional relationship is preserved in the way in which the Annamite addresses a Chinese as "uncle" while the latter addresses the Annamite as "tail of a rat." The existence of this *modus vivendi* meant that the energy of the Indo-Chinese nationalists and intellectuals was not deflected from their main purpose, that of gaining independence from the French. Again the contact maintained by the leaders with Chinese communists across the border was a source of support and encouragement.

The French policy of assimilation appealed only to the few who found their personal interests coincided with those of their masters and who had succeeded in attaining citizenship. For the rest the policy of repression and exploitation was sufficient to ensure that the spirit of revolution, though driven underground, should never flag. Combined with the attitude of mind of the French officials toward colonial life in general, it left the country in a fearful state of unpreparedness to resist external danger as the war clouds began to gather in the late thirties. Apart from a small and ill-armed French garrison, the country was virtually defenseless. It was not a question of a complacent feeling that native assistance was unnecessary as in Malaya—or a disinclination to place the latest weapons in the hands of natives as in Java. It was fully realized that the natives could not be safely trusted with weapons of even the oldest

vintage, for the first thing they would do with them would be to turn them against their masters.

However, in 1938 the Minister for the Colonies did make a last-moment gesture which seems to have something of the smack of a Cripps mission about it. He talked about forming an Annamite army, releasing political prisoners, enlarging the franchise, and making more room in the administration for natives. But the offer was too late. It was met with a distrust similar to that which Cripps was to find in India. Furthermore, in Indo-China a really severe persecution of nationalism had solidified public feeling against the white rulers in a manner unequaled elsewhere in colonial Asia. Certainly after previous experiences the Indo-Chinese could hardly be expected to show much enthusiasm for further military adventures in France; and it was there if anywhere that the French wanted the Annamites to serve, for there is no reason to suppose that France at this time regarded the danger from Japan more seriously than did the other European Pacific powers.

Not until the distinguished General Catroux became governor general in the summer of 1939 was the plight of Indo-China in face of the threat of Japanese aggression fully appreciated. But what could he do with the Indo-Chinese unlikely to raise a finger to prevent a change of masters? In a statesmanlike manner he tried to hold Japan off by appeasement while profiting by the time gained to send, even later than had the Dutch, a mission to the United States to buy all the arms they could secure. But this could deceive nobody in view of the known fact that

the regime had a foundation of sand. Before Catroux's plans could mature he had been replaced by the spineless Vichy Governor General Decoux who at once surrendered to Japanese demands.

It is easy to condemn the French of Indo-China for their collapse with scarcely a show of fight, but we must remember that the circumstances were not entirely the same as with the colonial Dutch, whose queen and government were safe and who could place greater trust in their native forces. And undoubtedly there were exceptions. I met one about this time on the verandah of the Sea View Hotel at Singapore. Monsieur X was an official whom I had known well in Hanoi and he was caught on his way back to Indo-China from leave when France fell. He had disembarked at Singapore to think the whole thing over. It was evidently a hard struggle, for he sat there hour after hour, his head buried in his hands except for the not infrequent intervals during which he sipped pensively at his cognac.

"Will you perhaps go back to France?" I asked one day.

"Of course I could go back to France, but that would be the same thing as going on to Indo-China," he said, with an agonized expression that told me that this was the very last thing he intended.

"Then you definitely will not obey Vichy orders?"

"Surely you know me well enough for that. You do not need to ask such a question."

"Then where will you go?"

"I shall go to Shanghai. I will lose my pension but there is a Jesuit monastery there. I am sure they will take me in."

Monsieur X did not go to Shanghai. Months later I



## YEARS OF BLINDNESS

heard that he had gone to London where he had joined de Gaulle. In him had triumphed the true spirit of France, the spirit that since that day has grown ever stronger in a defeated but still unconquered France that awaits only the time when it can arise to break its bonds and drive out the invader. But like all true Frenchmen, Monsieur X was a brave man and an independent thinker. Unfortunately there were many in Indo-China who preferred the easy path. To have run contrary to Vichy's orders would have meant the loss of pensions and a peaceful old age in France, the great reward for which the mass of officials had worked for long years in this land of hated exile with its nerve-racking, unhealthy climate. So for those with whom it was a habit to obey orders what easier than to continue to obey the orders of the man who was now governor general? It will perhaps help us to appreciate further what the loss of a pension meant to Indo-China officials, as well as to understand one more cause of the French failure to make good their hold on their far eastern empire, if we look more closely into the fine art they made of escapism.

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ESCAPE IN EXILE

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THE FACT is that the average Frenchman found colonial life too distasteful to make any sort of success of it. Having left his heart in France, how could he take the same unremitting interest in such work as the more phlegmatic Dutchman and Englishman? Of all colonials the French alone knew the true horror of exile, for it was an exile of the soul. But it had to be borne, both for the glory of France and, in many cases, for lack of opportunity at home. So Saigon came to be something more than a commercial center. It developed into a little brick and stucco imitation Paris.

Only in Saigon would such a phenomenon have been possible. By comparison Pnom-Penh was a French provincial city. Hanoi was the center of officialdom, where the atmosphere was too heavy with the cares of empire for even mock gaiety to thrive. But in Saigon normally there was enough of wealth and commercial success to bring into being a city of shady boulevards, cafés, and nocturnal haunts, with a romantic Chinese city near by, and so to recapture something of the spirit of all those good things

in life for which the French in exile yearned. So unless obliged to go to Mount Bokor or Dalat after a spell of sickness, where there was little to do but shoot tame pigeons and grumble, for the Frenchman on short leave it was to Saigon that all roads led.

Before we see what Saigon had to offer it will be well to visit one of those remote stations where the average French colonist had to spend so many years of his life. I will take as my example the little Cambodian seaport of Réam as I first knew it in 1924, just after it had been opened. I got to know it well, for I discovered it as a place easy of access by the weekly French steamer that called there on the way from Bangkok to Saigon. Yet it was still completely out of the world for anyone who wanted a few quiet days by the sea.

The port of Réam comprised a single wharf with facilities for the coasting steamer or for a couple of junks. Behind the wharf a tin-roofed godown was intended to house the cargo, after unloading, until it could be taken away by the new earth road that led to Kampot and Pnom-Penh. Besides the two or three wooden bungalows that housed the European population there was only a cluster of native attap-thatched huts alongside the wharf. So there was nothing as yet to spoil the pristine beauty of the palm-fringed bathing beach, where I used to enjoy a few days lazing in the sun.

Though Réam was no Miami, the circumstance that made such visits practicable was that it already boasted a shack-like *auberge*. The proprietor of this little inn was an old Frenchman named Serraire, an excellent cook, who

evidently had some good reason for hiding himself in Indo-China. It was rarely enough that the *auberge* was patronized, for only occasionally did a passenger arrive on the steamer and stay the night before continuing his journey overland to Pnom-Penh. But Serraire had hopes, or so he said, that Réam would some day be a great port and then perhaps his shack would vie with the Continental at Saigon. Meanwhile he took life easily, and his only daughter Paulette acted as hostess, for her Annamite mother was dead. She was one of those alluring products of French influence in Indo-China, a supple and slender but full-breasted creature, with heavy blue-black tresses, an olive-pink complexion, and languorous haunting eyes. Well educated in Saigon, she spoke French correctly, though with a slight oriental accent that added to her charm.

Two other Frenchmen made up the rest of Réam's little European community at that time. One was Lorgeau, the mustachioed police officer, a typical lower-class Frenchman, more ignorant of the country and its people than one would have believed possible for anyone who had already been fifteen years in Indo-China. A confirmed bachelor, it was his habit to shuffle over from his lonely ill-kept bungalow at *apératif* time, usually with some grumble about the incorrigibility of the *indigenes*. With bare feet, dirty white shirt and trousers, to which he added, on occasions when he desired to impress a native, a sun helmet decorated with the arms of the Third Republic, he spent the greater part of his day lounging on his own verandah smoking innumerable cigarettes, sipping cognac, and reading out-of-date copies of *La Vie Parisienne*. Finally there was de

Becker, the young customs officer, a cut above the policeman and a recent arrival from Europe. Like most new brooms he still had some interest in his work, and the inspection of cargoes from the Chinese junks seemed to keep him busy most of the day, though he seldom failed to put in an appearance at the *auberge* toward sundown.

While old Monsieur Serraire regaled us as we drank our Dubonnet with anecdotes of café life in Montparnasse, and told of the little restaurant of his heart where but for certain circumstances he would now be spending his declining years, I noticed that the eyes of the young customs officer seldom wandered far from Paulette's ravishing lines.

De Becker was young and still enthusiastic and, as I went with him on several fishing expeditions in the customs launch, I got to know him quite well.

"You seem very interested in Paulette," I remarked on one such occasion.

"Well, I don't intend to remain here as a celibate for five years like Lorgeau, just depending on brandy for the relief of boredom in this wretched place," he replied.

"What's standing in your way then?"

"Old Serraire would insist on actual marriage for one thing; and then you see I'm not sure how she would go down in France, and I intend to return there some day."

"Oh, I see that's your problem," and then, changing the subject, I added, "What do you make of your colleague, by the way? What brings such a rough type of fellow into the service?"

De Becker gazed at me pityingly. "Don't you know that

no one who hasn't murdered both his father and mother would enter the French colonial police?"

So at Réam I felt that as a result of the *entente cordiale* prevailing in those days I had been permitted to know a little of the inner life of a small French colonial station. Perhaps it was not quite typical, for in most cases there would be a missionary and a couple of settlers with their wives and families, and a little *cercle* where they could all gossip and drink. Then instead of just Lorgeau's grumbling there would have been in addition the quarreling of the families, their nerves set on edge by living at too close quarters with one another.

On another occasion I took the opportunity of visiting a French rubber estate in Cochin China. That is to say, it was French so far as the management was concerned, but in this case the capital was British. A visiting director out from England, a Mr. Jameson, happened to be a fellow passenger of mine on the coasting steamer to Saigon.

"Would you like to see how a French rubber estate is run?" he suggested.

I was not excited at the idea for I imagined that it would be much like a Malayan rubber estate, but I said that perhaps it would be interesting.

"Well, come and see," he invited. "I have to go and spend a week there inspecting the place, but I shall be in Saigon next Wednesday or Thursday and will look out for you at the Rotonde."

So a few days later I found myself on my way out to an estate at some obscure place a couple of hours' journey

from Saigon by auto. The French manager met us at the approach from the bungalow to which he was just returning from his office. He was a well-set-up man of about thirty-five, and despite the unmistakably French shape of his white topi, in khaki shirt and trousers he looked much like the typical English planter of the earlier days. As it was a little too early for drinks we strolled over to look at the factory among the rubber trees. It was all very much as I had expected, but I gathered that in such low-lying country it had been a tremendous task twelve years previously to drain the land and build the estate roads. It had certainly been a much heavier job than was usual in Malaya, though in both cases the jungle had first to be cleared.

"Did you get much shooting in those days?" I inquired.

"*Mais oui*," replied the manager, his face lighting up with a smile of recollection. "You shall see some fine *sladang* heads in my bungalow. Unfortunately now all the jungle around has been cleared, either by us or the native rice growers beyond, so I had to give up shooting as a pastime. But," he added, with something of a leer, "you see what a fine motor road we have to Saigon. Well, it's Saigon for me nowadays every time."

We had now arrived at the bungalow. There on the verandah it was not the *sladang* heads that first attracted my notice, but two young and sparkling Annamite girls who looked as though they had certainly been collected in Saigon, and not long ago either.

"Yvonne and Marie," introduced the Frenchman. "I am not married, but I have five wives," he chuckled.

"Are they all Annamites?" I inquired, wondering

whether variety was not part of the appeal, and knowing that many Frenchmen farther north favored the fair-skinned Laotienne.

"Yes, they're all Annamites. You see, the Annamite girls are, how shall I say, more adaptable to our French ways."

The girls giggled for they understood something of what was being said. Though dressed in bright silks cut in the Annamite fashion they had acquired quite charming French manners, and just at the moment they were mixing drinks with evident skill. I saw nothing of the others. Perhaps they had not yet been sufficiently "assimilated" to be present on such occasions. Then, just as we were about to sit down to a curry tiffin, there was the sound of a motor horn. A few moments later a smartly dressed young French woman tripped up the steps.

If I had expected anything in the way of a contretemps I was to be disappointed. The two Annamite girls ran forward eagerly to welcome Madame Leclerc, the wife of one of the estate assistants. She returned their greetings without the slightest sign of embarrassment. They were evidently friends. Yes, she would stay to tiffin. She had hoped to see Monsieur Jameson during his visit. A shadow crossed the manager's face. He was evidently not so pleased. I soon discovered why. Madame Leclerc looked pale and worried and it was evident from the first that she had come with a purpose.

Madame Leclerc had no intention of letting Mr. Jameson off lightly and she was not to be put off by my presence. The roof of her bungalow leaked in several places. Why was the estate carpenter such an imbecile? The place



was overrun with large black scorpions and she was afraid that the baby would be bitten. The baby was teething and must go for a holiday to Dalat. Her husband was run-down from malaria and it was too bad for the manager to say he could not be spared. When could they go to Dalat? When would the roof be mended properly and the scorpions banished?

On the other hand Yvonne and Marie were bright and entertaining. They wanted to hear about Siam. Had I seen the new queen? Was she beautiful? Did she do her hair in the latest Western style? I must be sure to visit a certain new and very chic Chinese restaurant in Cholon before I left Cochin China.

"There now, you have seen something of a French rubber estate," said Mr. Jameson as he saw me to his waiting car, "and also something of our little problems."

"Yes, and very interesting they are," I replied somewhat obliquely. They certainly gave, and still do give, me food for thought. Perhaps the ménage I had seen was not typical and so one cannot generalize. Indo-China had long been invaded by white women, though I knew of a number of highly placed French officials who had actually married natives and sent their children home to France to be educated. As in Holland the lack of a color bar made this feasible. But evidently this estate manager was one of those who had different ideas. No doubt he cherished the idea of returning to France and marrying a French woman some day. But not in Indo-China. He had seen the example of Madame Leclerc and others like her. He was not married as he rightly said, despite his multiplicity of

"wives," and I gathered that children would not have been encouraged. These Annamite "wives" were merely playthings, designed to make bearable the monotony of his exile.

The worst of Saigon was the oppressive, well nigh suffocating heat. Its clinging moistness seemed even worse than that of Bangkok or Batavia because of the incongruity of the make-believe French atmosphere and the attempt to set at naught the inflexible demands of the tropics. In the morning business was somehow or other carried on, but in the unbearable afternoon, everyone, even the drawers of the *pousse-pousses* (rickshaws), succumbed to a long siesta. At last, in the evening, the city revives and the boulevards take on their mock air of glamor. The cafés are crowded with French men and women who try hard to appear cheerful. There are bright lights, chic restaurants, and withal a very fair imitation of Parisian life, if one could only forget the heat and the mosquitoes and sit quietly sipping one's drink and watching the passers-by. Perhaps the opera season has begun or there is a dance at the Continental. But if not it doesn't matter. The boulevards have come to life and there are bright lights. The men and women are all French, or at least *métises*. There are few Annamites or other natives about to break the illusion. They are allowed in the French city only if on business in the daytime or as *pousse-pousse* coolies or private servants. The boulevards and the public gardens are for the French.

Social life for residents both in Saigon and Hanoi, as apart from visitors from upcountry, is formal and consists

of bridge parties and concerts at the *cercle* and an endless round of correct dinner parties. Conversation is inclined to the artificial and to the avoidance of the unpleasant realities of the day. Music and art are great stand-bys. Few Frenchmen in Indo-China would deny that they appreciated not only their own artistic heritage but also the wonderful arts of Indo-China for the preservation of which they had made themselves responsible. In this they differed from the average Dutchman in Java, and from many Englishmen in India who are content to go through life supposing that the Taj Mahal is just the name of a Bombay hotel. The Frenchman might perhaps never get so far as to visit Angkor—the claims of Saigon life left so little time on all too short vacations—but he would never deny that he would like to see it.

Since the subject of Angkor was bound to make its appearance in anything I wrote about Indo-China, this may be the place to give the French their due as archaeologists. Possibly their splendid work of rescuing from oblivion the culture of the Khmers will be the one permanent monument to French occupation. Though discovered so long ago as 1861 by the French naturalist Mouhot, the ruins of Angkor remained neglected in Siamese possession until 1909. The discovery had thrilled France, and when a "rectification of the boundary" brought the coveted prize under French jurisdiction there began a quarter-century of labor and research such as few ancient cities have ever had bestowed on them. Laboriously the French cleared the obstructing jungle, where the roots, forcing themselves between the blocks of masonry, had already overturned

or distorted many minor temples and threatened noble Angkor Wat itself. Approach roads had to be constructed, and an army of forest officers with their gangs of coolies kept busy waging a continuous battle with the undergrowth, which had no intention of relinquishing its claim to the ruins it had for five hundred years shared only with the wild beasts of the forest. And then the French architects began the careful restoration of the old buildings to something approaching their ancient glory. As one of the wonders of the world they became a goal of thousands of enthusiastic world travelers and art lovers.

Of course, all this cost money, and we may believe that, as with the Dutch in Java, it was partly because this preservation of the ancient past paid dividends in the form of a lively tourist traffic that it received so much encouragement from the French government. But such considerations did not actuate the scholars engaged in the work. For them it was a labor of love. They succeeded at Angkor, as Francis Garnier and the other great French colonial explorers succeeded in the geographical field, because it was such work as this that fired the French imagination and appealed to them in a way that the monotonous business of colonization could never do. And what the loss of Angkor would have meant to French pride can be gauged by the way in which, even when the French fortunes had fallen to their lowest ebb, they argued bitterly for its retention in those wretched Japanese "arbitrated" negotiations with the Siamese. One would like to think that it was in recognition of the French achievement that the Siamese gave way on this point, did we not feel only too

certain that it was because the Japanese were eager to get this ancient center of Asiatic culture under their own control for propaganda purposes as soon as possible.

The Japanese interest in Angkor is likely to stop at mere physical possession. Certainly the French scholars will scarcely have the spirit to work under Japanese masters. Perhaps, as I write, the jungle occupation is already as complete as that of the Japanese. That is why I speak not of the preservation of the buildings themselves, though we need not give up hope for that, but only of the rescue of Khmer culture from oblivion as the lasting monument to French occupation. The jungle and Japanese neglect may allow temples once more to fall into decay, just as German bombs destroyed London churches. But in neither case can the spirit that animated them be lost.

Even were it excusable to make such an exception, it is not my intention to dwell further on the merits of French archaeological achievement in Indo-China, any more than I have allowed myself to indulge in panegyrics of the many other aspects of latter-day imperialism which were beneficial and praiseworthy, but which have no bearing on the theme of this book. Nevertheless, even my theme justifies allusion to it. The fact is that the interest in the art of Indo-China, at least in the dilettante way many French colonists professed an interest in it, was largely escapist. And that being so, the fact that there existed in Indo-China the remains of one of the great arts of all times was for the French a fortunate coincidence.

The possession of such an artistic pearl beyond compare as Angkor had another advantage for those con-

demned to spend their lives in Indo-China. Apart from the foreign tourists who interested nobody except the revenue departments and hotel keepers, there was in the season a steady trickle of distinguished French visitors who had come out on the fine vessels of the *Messagerie Maritimes* to see this glorious ornament of the French Empire. Among them were counts and countesses and other scions of the French aristocracy who brought with them something of the allure of an earlier Imperial France. Their presence at the banquets and dinner parties of Hanoi and Saigon gave society something of the wit and sparkle which otherwise would have been quite lacking in a colony. Even to read their names in the Saigon newspapers and to know that they were among them gave the more humble people something of the sensation that they were after all perhaps not so entirely cut off from all that they held dear.

I have wandered too far afield from the boulevards. For the average upcountry official or planter the open-air café in the mock Paris of the East furnished all one could reasonably expect. There one could almost forget the monotony of the morrow as one sipped one's bock, one's cognac, or—yes, one's absinthe. Indo-China remained the stronghold of absinthe, banned from metropolitan France. It is said that great novelists have been stimulated by it to write their best works. Lesser folks have found solace in it and also a short cut to the grave. With its alluring sweet taste of aniseed it has certainly been the downfall of many a young Frenchman; and the worst thing about it is that the individual can never be sure how he is going to react to it until he has experimented. A glass or two may ruin

the nervous system. Or one may drink it for years and seemingly reap none of its ill effects, enjoying only the curiously satisfying form of intoxication it brings.

I watched the progress of one absinthe addict over a number of years on my visits to Indo-China. At first Monsieur Y was a prosperous dentist in Hanoi, attending the elite among the higher officials. But after a time, so unsteady became his hand that he had to move to Saigon, where people in from remote stations would be less discriminating. It fitted in with his own state of health too, for during the day he was now *hors de combat*. Then, in the cool of the evening, he would sally forth to some boulevard café, or perhaps to the Continental or the Rotonde, where he could get into conversation with the unwary. After a couple of drinks, judging to a nicety the exact state of the prospective client's inebriety, he would get on to the subject of dentistry.

"Yes, the tropics do make a mess of one's teeth, Monsieur, it doesn't do to neglect them. Wouldn't it be a good idea to have a look at them now while you're in Saigon?"

Ten to one the victim would agree that yes it was a "good idea" and before long, probably around 10 P.M., after another drink or two, they would be bowling off in a couple of *pousse-pousses* to Monsieur Y's office, where we trust the matter was put right to their mutual satisfaction. One evening it definitely wasn't. The drill had slipped once too often and Monsieur Y had to give up dentistry. Out of pity a friend of earlier days got him some kind of job in a mercantile office in Tourane; but sad to relate, Monsieur Y did not long survive the regular hours.

## ESCAPE IN EXILE

Some Frenchmen preferred opium. That was the case not only in Indo-China but also in Siam until the latter country agreed gradually to suppress opium in accordance with the recommendations of the League of Nations. I remember the consternation among the French smokers in Bangkok when the decree was issued that all habitual addicts must register. What was to be done? It would be most undignified to register like a Chinese coolie. Those snobbish Englishmen would get to know who smoked and who didn't. Evidently it was either a question of getting a transfer to some job in Saigon or carrying on somehow in secret by dint of a little smuggling.

The latter was not so easy. Opium smoking required skilled assistance. Both in Bangkok, until the new law was enforced, and in Cholon, all the necessary facilities existed at the fashionable Chinese restaurants. One simply ordered a private room, just as though one were going to entertain one's friends to a special Chinese dinner. Only when one arrived the large carved dining table had been removed and there were no "boys" waiting ready to bring in the first steaming bowls of bird's-nest soup. Instead low couches, each with a cool porcelain pillow on which the smoker might rest his head, were arranged around the room. With one hand he might every now and then raise a glass of cognac to his lips, just to support the heart a little. With the other he would puff lazily at his pipe. Beside him knelt the skilled and ever watchful little Chinese girl, intently tending the lamp or once more filling the pipe as after a few puffs it tended to flag. Perhaps eight pipes would be enough, perhaps many more were needed,



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before the smoker was wafted into his dreamland paradise. There was no danger of intrusion for the door was bolted fast. But if the blissful state was a little slow in coming, as for the hardened smoker it might well be, then, for a little extra payment, one might arrange for a bevy of young Chinese girl musicians to play soft music and sing sweet airs to while away the interim. . . .

Even now as I write there may be some in Indo-China who thus seek forgetfulness. Certainly the Japanese are not likely to stand in their way.

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WESTERN SEEDS ON EASTERN SOIL

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WHILE WESTERN imperialists have been gradually forced to prepare the subject peoples for a measure of self-government, and linked with this has been the zeal of the missionaries to convert the "heathen," the East has been interested only in acquiring the secrets of Western material science. In this it began tentatively with the idea of sharing some of the more garishly attractive side of European life, but it eventually entered in to open competition and agitation with the ultimate goal of ridding Asia of Western economic and political control. At the same time the earlier contacts on terms of equality ceased as bitterness was aroused, so that a mutual understanding arising from cultural synthesis was precluded. It seemed as though the ill-omened dictum "East is East and West is West . . ." had finally set its seal on the situation.

Once the interest in its discovery had worn off, the time-honored learning of the East was pushed aside as impracticable and useless in the new era of materialism. In India, for example, the wisdom of the ancients, though praised by thinkers like Goethe and Schopenhauer, was dismissed

as purely academic by the men who mattered. And in formulating a scheme for the introduction of useful Western education the government accepted the verdict of Macaulay, who condemned Hindu literature as "false history, false astronomy, false metaphysics, which attended their false religion; the languages of Western Europe civilised Russia; I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindu what they have done for the Tartar."

This, in the words of that great lover of Indian culture, the late Sir Francis Younghusband, was "quite an unnecessary offense to Indians." Yet the spirit of Macaulay is not dead even now, judging by this remarkable utterance of Lady Astor, quoted recently in the *London News Chronicle*: "I would like," she says, "China and Russia to be in the framework of a new society formed by America and the British Commonwealth, but *they would have to get into the British way of thinking.*" Obviously, then, any preparation of India for a degree of self-rule within the Empire had to be on purely Western lines. Nor could a Christian government be expected to encourage non-Christian thought. Had it not shown a fine degree of tolerance in allowing the Indians freedom of religion, except of course for such horrors as sutteeism and child marriage, and had it not shouldered the responsibility of caring for the old architectural monuments?

The Asiatics held their peace, kept their own counsel, and proceeded to take just what suited them from the new knowledge. The use to which they would put what they absorbed of Western civilization as soon as they had mastered it should have been apparent to anyone who had

taken the trouble to note just what aspects of Western life appeal spontaneously to the Asiatic. These aspects were certainly not European thought or religion; and it would be better to exclude even such blessings to our way of thinking as hospitals, famine relief, irrigation, and improved sanitation provided by European governments, since these things they were given whether they wanted them or not. What the Asiatic wanted first were the Western contrivances which served the purpose of his own way of life while in no way conflicting with such vital matters as religious beliefs and immemorial custom, which he is on no account prepared to sacrifice. A few simple examples showing the reception of Western ideas among the illiterate throughout the length and breadth of Asia may serve to bring home the purely material interest of the East in the West.

Perhaps nothing exhibits the attraction for the Asiatic of the more garish side of Western material science better than does the love of electric lighting. This is above all because it serves to enhance the illumination considered so essential at most Asiatic festivals. In India the most attractive of such occasions used to be *Diwali* or "feast of lamps," when merchants and bankers throughout the country count and worship their wealth. It was the custom on this occasion to decorate every house and wall with innumerable little earthenware oil lamps set in niches. Now, wherever funds will allow it, they are replaced by high-powered electric lamps which have certainly increased the glare if not the general aesthetic effect.

## YEARS OF BLINDNESS

Most Indians possess an electric torch, and when the *City of Benares* was sunk almost the only torch that the survivors had among them was in the jealous possession of an Indian laskar. In the remotest parts of Asia where electricity, except perhaps in the form of a cheap electric torch, has not yet reached, I have always found the kerosene lamp, closely followed by the products of the British American Tobacco Company, to be the very first pioneer of Western influence. Catering to the same spirit of garishness were all those Chinese, Indian, and Japanese shops throughout the East which specialized in the sale of cheap mirrors, intended to make the most of the bright kerosene lamps, and in crude lithographs of mythical beings very dear to the native heart for the decoration of his humble attap shack. This love of mirrors has a royal precedent, for the last kings of Burma decorated the interior of their Mandalay palace entirely with mirrors imported from Europe.

No Western innovation has been more appreciated by the Asiatics than improved communications. Again the innovation serves Eastern religion and Eastern ways of thought. The third-class railway carriage is perhaps no great advance over the old-time bullock cart of the Grand Trunk Road in the matter of comfort, but it does get the traveler there quickly. And the destination as often as not is some place of pilgrimage which, through the medium of India's 42,000 miles of railroads, can now be reached at a fraction of the cost and expenditure of time needed formerly.

In countries where rail service was still limited there

was the enterprising Chinese bus, its tires worn dangerously thin and the engine and chassis held together by odd bits of wire. It never hesitated for one moment to set off on the most incredibly long journey, crammed with a motley collection of gaily clad passengers and with a full load of ducks and chickens on the roof. And if here perhaps the necessity of going to market was a more usual motive than a pilgrimage, for the simple dweller in hot climates were not the joys of moving from place to place in the magic car a sufficient incentive for travel? It has been said that one of the main objects of the Indian estate coolie in coming to Malaya at his own expense, and in face of the political ban imposed by the Congress Party, was to acquire a bicycle and similar conveniences. And what more pleasant corollary of all this hot travel than those other highly acceptable gifts of the West, ice and cheap sweet aerated waters?

Then there was the cinema. But if Charlie Chaplin and the Wild West in the days of the silent films contained so much that is common to human nature the world over, and also provided an insight into life in the white man's country, latter-day sophistication proved too much for the average Asiatic audience. Moreover, Asiatics were used to their entertainment being linked to their religion, as in the temple dances and the old masked dramas and shadow plays. Soon Asiatic enterprise, with a technique that was at first indifferent to say the least, began to supply the deficiency. Though producers in Japan and in the great Indian cities like Calcutta and Bombay could find sufficient audiences to appreciate films dealing with social problems

in Eastern settings, the masses preferred representations in the new medium of the old religious dramas and the mythological stories which they had been used to seeing depicted on the native stage since childhood. I have seen Indian cinemas catering to the masses packed with an audience which followed in rapt amazement every move of the hero Rama and the monkey god Hanuman as with atrocious technique and the most blatant trick photography they worsted their enemies the giants, and performed the impossible with an abandon with which in comparison the *Thief of Bagdad* would pass as normal everyday life.

At first Western education was sought after because it seemed to lead to the acquisition of some of the most immediately attractive trappings of the white man's civilization. In India the product was at first simply the harmless *babu*. Originally meaning a man learned in his own literature, *babu* came to denote the hybrid graduate of the government and the missionary schools who had acquired the rudiments of European education. In Calcutta the Bengali *babu* thrived in his thousands, for he became an indispensable means of carrying on the administration. And he remains ubiquitous, wherever there are government offices, with his inseparable slippers and large black umbrella, his flowery English and the big printed volume containing the latest official regulations for his department. If his pay was not high it was at least higher and steadier than it would have been had he been merely literate in the vernacular; and it enabled him to acquire quite a number of those Western contrivances he coveted, in

addition to the emblems of his class, the slippers and the umbrella.

India had no monopoly of this babuism. It spread like wildfire throughout the East, where in every country the half-educated clerk, be he Chinese, Javanese, Siamese, or Burman, was produced in large numbers as a useful link between the governing class and the masses. In trade the opportunities for employment with the large European corporations lead to a rush on the part of commercially minded Indians and others to obtain the same kind of basic Western knowledge. Outstanding clerks became independent merchants and middlemen. As such their cooperation was welcomed by the Europeans, and in the colonies it suited the overseas Chinese to cooperate rather than to attempt to compete with the powerful European interests. They retained their ancestor worship, dwelt in Chinese homes, and sent vast sums to China either as charity or more recently for war relief.

It was purely the material side of the West that appealed to these wealthy overseas Chinese, as anyone might see, for example, by visiting one of those miniature Coney Islands, the "New World" or the "Happy World," which functioned in Singapore and formed the heart of its Asiatic night life until a few days before the fortress fell. In each case high walls guarded the many-acred expanse of glittering pleasure haunts from the prying eyes of those who could not raise the small admission fee. Once within the walls a maze of avenues, blazing with bright lights, led one past side shows of every kind, shooting galleries, mild gambling games, freak exhibits, and booths selling



fruit juices and candies. Dotted here and there were the restaurants catering to every race and creed. They were well patronized, as were the boxing and wrestling arenas in which the championships of the Far East were decided.

Besides one or more cinemas there were the Chinese theaters, open to the heavy scented air of the tropic night. The bright arc lamps threw floods of light on the noisy Asiatic crowds nightly swarming through the turnstiles. Lithe Indians, sarong-clad Malays and Javanese, here and there a red-fezzed Arab, all mingled in a motley surge on pleasure bent. Whole Chinese families used to stroll out for the evening; grandmother dressed in sober black might be seen mincing along uncertainly on tiny pinched feet among her granddaughters, their dark hair permanently waved, gay as butterflies in smartly cut, flowered cotton and silk trousers and tight-fitting, high-necked jackets.

Most of the crowd were content to gape in easily satisfied contentment at the unending kaleidoscope of the old-fashioned Chinese theaters, listen with evident appreciation to the raucous clanging of the Celestial orchestras, and eat a meal of tasty curry at some inviting stall. But not so the representatives of the wealthy Straits Chinese merchant class. They had left their shining American automobiles outside and now, clad in immaculate tuxedos, could be seen elbowing their way from the expensive first-class restaurants to the central attraction, the great glittering dance hall.

Inside the softly lit air-conditioned hall the emphasis was on the customs of the West. Swing bands played the popular dance melodies of America. Seated at little tables

the beautiful Chinese taxi dancers chatted in twos or threes or entertained their patrons. Often bored and languid, these tall, slender girls adopted an air of sophistication that they imagined went with Western ways, an appeal which they were careful to enhance by the use of such hybrid names as Miss Betty Wong or Miss Lucy Lee. Garbed in bright-hued Shanghai dresses which emphasized to full advantage every line of the figure and were slit to the knee to show a lace-trimmed underskirt and a shapely silk-clad leg, they used to glide all unmindful of Asia's fate with their admiring partners beneath the colored spot-lights.

In such surroundings the successful Chinese merchant, who as a discriminating materialist wanted not only the best in jade and champagne but also the best in feminine beauty that money could buy, found life as he wanted it. Not, of course, the dull aimless life of the Singapore Europeans in their stupid clubs with their silly games and formal social life, but a passable imitation of life as led by those superior Europeans who had built the international settlement at Shanghai and really knew what life should be.

On a par with this conception might be placed the average oriental potentate's interest in horse racing and the acquisition of white wives. One might have thought that the latter would have been instrumental in deepening the understanding between East and West, but it seems that relations seldom reached a level above the purely materialistic. Earlier attempts to satisfy these cravings for contact with the West were not always so easily satisfied. Old King

Mongkut of Siam, already in possession of a very numerous harem, had his talent scouts in every country of Europe attempting to make the necessary matrimonial arrangements, for he had just installed an electric telephone in his women's quarters and, by association of ideas, he next fancied a white wife. His great desire was for an English lady but none was found willing to volunteer at any price. Several French women did answer the advertisements, but his Majesty had stipulated for unblemished character. On inquiry none of the applicants was found to come up to the required standards and King Mongkut was never able to gratify his ambition. But the agents never ceased their efforts and kept the old man in a fever of expectancy, for at least they had discovered what for them was a most profitable racket.

Nowadays oriental potentates more frequently take trips to Europe and do not have to employ the services of go-betweens. In recent years the star Don Juan of the East has not been any minor Indian prince, as one might suppose, but strangely enough a Malay, member of what is supposedly the most inert of the Eastern races. I refer of course to His Highness the Sultan Ibrahim of Johore, whose romances are too well known to need enlargement here. After divorcing Mrs. Wilson, the widow of a local English doctor, it was Miss Lydia Hill, a London dancer, who next attracted the elderly Sultan's fancy and was his guest for a time at Johore. Meanwhile the Sultan had seen a film portraying Miss Dorothy Lamour and for some time by his express orders no other films were allowed to occupy the screen at Johore Bahru. It was a bitter disappoint-

ment to the Sultan when Miss Lamour, being already happily married, was obliged to decline the Sultan's invitation to come to Johore. Some time later Miss Hill's tragic death in an English air raid paved the way to the Sultan's marriage with a beautiful red-haired Rumanian who happened to sell him a charity flag one day in London. But none of these Western contacts seem to have had very much effect on the Sultan's attitude to the Japanese when they presented themselves in his territory.

Such developments had no immediate significance for the future of imperialism. For long the Asiatics had remained dazzled with the first fruits of westernization. Those that were born or raised themselves above the level of the inert illiterate masses were content to use their smattering of the new education to share something of the Europeans' wealth and position by cooperation either in the lower administrative grades or in commerce. There was nothing in the education as dispensed by the Europeans to make the Asiatics question their position, much less seriously challenge the white man's supremacy. Schoolmasters who came out to the government schools were a mixed lot. Some were no less fallible to the effects of the climate than were other foreign residents. I have known schoolmasters in Siam unable to teach for more than half an hour before calling for a gin sling and this went on at intervals throughout the morning, the teaching the while degenerating into an inaudible mumble as the private conversation of the students grew correspondingly louder.

Then there was the dear old Mr. Chips type who, having retired from a great public school in England on reach-

ing the age limit, was unable to make a break in a life-long association with boys. So he applied and was gladly taken on for a few years by some education department in the East which, harassed by budget restrictions, was thankful that in this case no question of pension would enter into the agreement. But there were many fine and efficient, if sometimes narrow-minded, schoolmasters who gave a lifetime to their chosen task, and they were found especially in the mission schools, both Catholic and Protestant. In Siam the Assumption College, so long staffed by a devoted body of French brothers, received the special protection and encouragement of the government. Generations of Siamese students became adept in taking all they could in the way of a sound elementary education while systematically side-stepping the religious issue.

Meanwhile, with the turn of the century, two new developments fraught with peril for Western imperialism made their appearance. These were the rapid extension of university education and the example set by Japan who had, while the world watched in amazement, successfully challenged the Russian Bear. Asia awoke then to a realization that she need not and would not sit at the feet of her Western teachers forever.

University education in India had begun in a small way in the middle of the nineteenth century. The government hoped that the Indian graduates with their love of litigation would in the main be satisfied with judicial posts, leaving the higher executive appointments for Europeans as formerly. In the twentieth century pressure for university education grew apace throughout the east, and uni-

versities were founded in such cities as Rangoon, Bangkok, and Hong Kong. Inevitably the new advanced teaching placed weapons in the hands of the Asiatics which they would soon turn against their European rulers. Subjects like natural sciences, economics, and political history, the favorite period being that of the French Revolution, attracted the students by reason of the new horizons they would open up if they could apply the principles involved in these teachings to changing the irksome limitations of life as they found it. At Rangoon they even tried to put these principles into practice on the spot, for the students began to mix in politics of the day and finally staged serious riots on the campus. As already mentioned, in 1938 a royal commission went to Malaya to study the question of opening a Malayan university, a matter that had forced its way to the fore as a result of local agitation. With the example of Rangoon before them it is scarcely surprising that their recommendation should have been negative.

With the hope of producing a more pro-European outlook, most imperial governments during the last three decades began to send more and more promising students for a long and thorough education in Europe. There was always the ready excuse that at the Asiatic universities complete facilities in every faculty did not yet exist. And in many cases the move did help to fill the ranks of pro-imperialist Asiatic officials. On their return to India, for example, there was the strong temptation to accept the offer of a good safe job in the administration, especially when at last, with certain reservations, the higher executive posts were being opened to Indians.

There were others, however, who though outwardly pleasant mannered and polished Westerners found their consciences could not permit them to acquiesce so easily in the *status quo*. Such men had come into contact in Europe with a white man of more intellectual and varied outlook than those who went out to the East as officials and teachers. As a result they were possessed of a more balanced judgment and were better able to bide their time than the products of local universities. But their critical faculties were also more highly developed by what they had seen in Europe. In particular they questioned the generally accepted superiority of the Western imperialists and their right to dominate. And in so doing, in them there was awakened the consciousness of India's own heritage. They were, just as much as were men like Iqbal and Tagore in the literary sphere, products of a renaissance. They added fresh fuel to the fires of nationalism that were kindling throughout the East, and out of a great mental conflict there developed, in such men as Nehru and the other more progressive leaders of the Indian Congress Party, a burning desire to bring their countrymen real freedom and equality.

One had to study very closely the thoughts of these men, as expressed in their speeches and their writings and in their actions, to realize that they were still Orientals and that the East was not dead in them. It was to this and the fact that they were still interested in taking from the West only what would benefit themselves, and now their community and country, that they owed the immense hold over the minds of the millions of their illiterate country-

men. That might be more easily appreciated in Gandhi, whose every utterance still breathed the unfathomable mysticism of the East and who in his habits retained the simple way of life of the Asiatic ascetic. But I have noticed that it has taken the prolonged study in the full limelight of the Cripps negotiations for Americans to realize that the outlook of even such apparently westernized Indian leaders as Nehru remains basically different from that of even the most liberal Western thinkers.

In the same way the West failed to understand that China would not accept indefinitely the limitations on its sovereignty imposed by foreigners. There had been a more sustained rush to bring Christianity to China than to any other Asiatic field of endeavor, and an enormous amount of educational work was carried out. The absence of caste restrictions also misled the missionaries into believing that westernization, superficially so rapid, was penetrating more deeply than in India. The adaptability of the materialistic "colonial" Chinese of the China coast settlements, the only ones known to most foreigners, lent support to the missionaries' view. There was a rush on the part of Chinese students to avail themselves of the opportunity to obtain an education in the United States, which was made possible by the return of the Boxer indemnity.

The necessity of adapting herself as rapidly as possible to Western ways, under the threat of foreign acquisitiveness, has tended to mask the fact that China's traditional culture is not forgotten, that the Chinese are more mystical than is generally supposed. Thus to many it has seemed



incongruous that Chiang Kai-shek should find the Chinese classics a source of spiritual strength and guidance, just as it came as a surprise for most that with all the good will for America of the new national government, unmodified Western methods could not be expected to solve Chinese political and economic problems.

As for Japan, though she retained her own religion, she had at first seemed such an apt pupil in American principles of democracy that it was never suspected that fascism might be preferred by the militaristic leaders of a people who still retained unshaken loyalty to doctrines of racial superiority and the divine kingship.

Thus it appears that, despite long years of association, the West, preoccupied with the desire to teach and convert, and at the same time the intention of keeping the Asiatic in subordination, had arrived at no understanding of the oriental mind or even an appreciation to what extent its outlook remained oriental. In his dealings with the West, especially with superior officials, the Asiatic maintained a habitually closed mind on matters on which he felt most deeply. I have heard it said that it was possible for an Indian civil servant to spend twenty years in close and friendly association with a high Indian colleague before discovering with a shock one day from some unexpected action that his Indian friend retained a completely divergent attitude of mind toward basic principles upon which compromise was impossible.\*

\* To take an example from my own experience: While I knew that Hindus, as compared to Moslems, have traditionally little historical sense, though adept at conducting lengthy discussions over religious hairsplittings, yet nowadays many learned Hindus have mastered the principles of modern historical re-

With this distrust and lack of mutual understanding it was quite natural that the Asiatics should have looked to Japan for leadership in a continent on which the European grip was so obviously slipping by reason of the progressive deterioration we have noted in previous chapters. Japan was free and had acquired the force with which to safeguard that freedom. Having retained that supreme blessing more firmly than any other people of Asia she had excelled in taking from the West what she thought suited her purposes. She had mastered the tricks of Western science, or so it must have appeared to Asiatics, however little disposed Westerners would be to admit this. Japan's position too as a world power was so surely entrenched that the imperialist powers sought her friendship and alliance, always in Eastern eyes a clear sign of weakness. Apart from her victories in battle over Russia she had challenged the European nations in commerce and had proved amazingly successful. She had particularly impressed the masses all over Asia by her ability to supply the Western goods they desired at a fraction of the price demanded by the Europeans and their Chinese agents. Such experiments as other Eastern countries had been able to make along the same lines, as in the case of India in ousting by her new mill products the piece goods of Manchester, or even by little Siam under her new regime, gave encouragement to follow Japan's leadership

search. What then has been my surprise, on occasion, to find after a long talk with a well-informed Indian scholar over some point of history rather than religion that it was not the quest for scientific accuracy that was really engaging his attention, but the superiority of some one metaphysical concept over another that to my mind had little connection with the point at issue.

in other directions as well. In short, not only with the highly educated leaders, but also with the more intelligent section of the masses, the bubble of European magic and omnipotence had been pricked throughout the East.

Had Japan then chosen to take her natural place as champion of the Asiatic nations in their demand for freedom, providing them with the initiative needed for concerted action, history in Asia would have taken a different course. Imperialism would probably have disappeared in the course of a bloodless revolution, since America would certainly not have fought to maintain it, nor would it have had the backing even of advanced European public opinion. That being the case it is obvious that an already declining system could not have retained its place in the face of the combined opposition of the peoples of Asia.

But Japan chose a different course. Philanthropy did not enter into her calculations. If democratic ideas have appeared from time to time in both Indian and Chinese history, and seem to appeal to some of the modern leaders of these countries, that certainly did not apply to Japan. Oriental despotism, preserved in a national mind unaltered by the influence of the West, now came to ally itself with militaristic fascism. It was to prepare the way for a career of bloodthirsty aggression such as Asia had not known since the days of Kublai Khan. Just because the decadent West was apparently tottering in two minds as to what extent it must meet the demands of the subject peoples, Japan had no intention of being cheated of the fruits of

the greatest lesson of all she had learned from the West, that of empire building.

Japan knew better than to show her hand during the decade or more that she was girding herself in readiness to strike at the raw material sources of southeastern Asia which she knew must be hers before she could hope to wage a decisive war against the imperialist powers. I shall indicate in later chapters the patient way in which Japan not only built up her strength by the proceeds of trade penetration, but sought the while to win over the subject peoples by posing as liberator of Asia and creator of a New Order. It was in this latter respect in particular that Japan, by reason of her clever propaganda, could wield a powerful weapon against the Western powers, for she alone could appeal to the other Asiatic nations as one Oriental to another. She could still profess, until she had shown her hand, an understanding of and sympathy for Asiatic religions and nationalist aspirations. This it was impossible for the Western powers to emulate, all too engrossed as they had been in dominating the subject peoples and trying to convert them to their way of thinking.

Nevertheless, while the significance of what is in reality an Asia-wide development is partly masked by Japan's overbearing aggressiveness, it would be a mistake not to keep constantly in mind the fact that, even when through disillusion thrown partially or wholly into the United Nations camp for the duration of the war, the other Asiatics on that account are no less determined to rid themselves of Western control.

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### THE STRUGGLE FOR MARKETS

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IT WAS the value in the home markets of such oriental luxuries as gems, silks, and spices that primarily lured European merchants to sponsor trading ventures to the East. The export trade was of secondary importance. In the seventeenth century both the British and the Dutch East India companies, who tried to monopolize the trade, complained bitterly of the competition by Indian traders whose fine silks were more suited to the peoples of the tropics than were the heavy British woolens.

At first the Europeans had no desire to impose their rule on the natives or to acquire territory other than small trading posts leased from the rulers. But impositions by extortionate native officials, the error of judgment of a sultan in causing the company's warehouses to be burned down in punishment for some real or supposed affront, soon led to wider territorial demands and the maintenance of an armed force to uphold the company's authority. Then came European industrial expansion, culminating in the nineteenth century. The enhanced need for markets for the increasing manufactures and the desire to control

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sources of raw material led to full-fledged imperialism and the establishment of colonies and protectorates.

In the days of the British East India Company the wealthy nabobs, as the employees of the company were known, made money so rapidly that if they survived the climate they could retire to England with a competence after a dozen years in India. But in 1834 the powers of the company were curtailed. There was a rush on the part of private capitalists to benefit by the new opportunity; and in particular to open up the China coast trade which had previously been monopolized by the British Company and certain privileged Chinese merchants. The troubles that followed led to the first Anglo-Chinese war and unshackled free trade. America had already forced Western commerce upon Japan and she now was ready for her share of the new China trade. While the British took Hong Kong the United States obtained a concession in Shanghai which was later merged in the International Settlement. Thus America developed an interest in the China market. But owing to the extent of the home market for her manufactures and her large export trade in raw materials such as oil and cotton, she felt none of the incentive to imperialism that motivated the overindustrialized European powers. Despite her acquisition of the Philippines, she was in general satisfied so long as she was not denied access to the raw materials produced by the European colonies of southeastern Asia.

As successors to the East India Company the great foreign trading companies and banking firms, in the main British, grew up throughout India and the Far East, their

palatial offices often the most striking features of the Bombay, Singapore, and Hong Kong waterfronts. It became difficult to believe that such colossal institutions owed their inceptions to bold individual enterprise and the willingness to take risks—in the days when the empire builders were still building. Nowadays one was seldom impressed that any vital spirit of enterprise actuated the staff. Probably most businessmen visiting Eastern cities are only too familiar with the not infrequently supercilious young Englishman, immaculately dressed in white, who remains seated as long as possible beneath a fan at the back of a large office, sheltering behind his defensive screen of Chinese clerks. His inaccessibility to callers is not necessarily compensated for by a close personal knowledge of local conditions. Too often he is out of touch with the natives, knows little of the language, and is far too dependent on the good services of his Chinese comprador and agents.

The young merchant's attitude of aloofness is perhaps an outgrowth of his discovery, soon after arrival in the Orient, that he has made a rapid jump in social level from his former position as clerk in a London shipping office. He is in some sense, though scarcely a financial one, in direct line of descent from the nabobs of John Company's days. As such he is of course vastly superior to the planters and miners. He may one day be a *burra sahib*, own race-horses, and be a leading light in the yacht club. If he paused to reflect that not by any means can every member of the staff rise to be manager, and that at best it takes a very long time, at least there was the consolation that once in the firm his future was secure. And in recent years se-

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curity is a consideration that has come increasingly to count.\*

The activities of the great Eastern trading and banking combines have indeed become so all embracing as to be as discouraging to individual enterprise as was the old East India Company to those whom it styled "interlopers." Mining prospectors have continued to be rewarded for their efforts by occasional strokes of good fortune. But for a really dramatic, though ill-fated, twentieth-century attempt at old-fashioned, large-scale exploitation under the very noses of the old established corporations, one has to go back to the notorious Duff Development case, the last echoes of which had by no means died away when I first went out to the East.

It must have been about 1909, when Britain acquired from Siam the northern Malay States, that Duff's scheme first came to light. So far as I remember the facts, this enterprising person had been a soldier who had elected to remain in the East on the expiration of his term of service, and with good reason. In the traditional pioneer manner he had wormed his way into the confidence of the Sultan of Kelantan, the northeastern Malay State, and had obtained a concession for its "development." But while he was in process of raising the necessary capital the transfer of Kelantan to British protection was effected. Duff found himself up against British officialdom. What had been per-

\* Is the recent Beveridge Report one more symptom of this attitude of mind? In the opinion of one correspondent to the London *Times* of December 5, 1942, the Report is "tending to weaken still further the spirit of initiative and adventure . . . not a symptom of the vitality of our civilization but of its approaching end."



missible under the somewhat shadowy Siamese suzerainty could not for one moment be tolerated by the Colonial Office, which no doubt had its own ideas as to the development of the newly acquired territory.

Duff, with the aid of his financial backers, stuck to his guns. The case was carried from court to court until it finally reached the House of Lords. There, in the best traditions of British justice, Duff won his great victory. But it proved to be a Pyrrhic one. The costs of the prolonged legal battle, which had dragged on for fifteen years or more, cost Duff's corporation every penny of the huge compensation it was finally awarded, and Duff himself died in London a ruined man. At the same time the British-protected state of Kelantan was practically bankrupted, and instead of being "developed" in one way or another it remained the poorest state in Malaya. Despite its strategic situation on the Siamese border and on the vulnerable east coast of the Peninsula, the backward state of its communications handicapped its defense. And the Kelantan Malays can scarcely retain very happy memories of their twenty-three years' British connection.

It would not be for a writer unconnected with commerce to attempt a detailed analysis of the way in which Japan undermined British and American commercial interests in China in the years before economic penetration gave way to military conquest. And in India and south-eastern Asia the effects of Japanese undercutting on the big business houses were less obvious. Either they were offset to some extent by the erection of tariff barriers or they were largely masked by the fact that most of these

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firms had large interests in the mining and planting industries. Despite setbacks during the depression these more than made up for losses in the import markets. But what could not escape the outside observer was the plight of British shipping engaged in the ocean carrying trade. Even old firms like the P. & O. found it difficult to carry on in face of subsidized foreign competition. They were obliged to depend largely on their mail contracts and the passages of government officials who were given no option to travel by other lines.

In the exploitation of raw materials, Asiatic competition had remained negligible for lack of capital or permission to obtain concessions. Even the Chinese in Malaya confined their tin-mining efforts to open casting, which touches only the superficial deposits. The Japanese were allowed to work the Malayan iron deposits because they would not have been profitable to the British. Thus until she was strong enough to embark on a career of aggression, Japan had to rely on successful trade competition to enable her to buy the raw materials she required during her period of intensive westernization and industrial development. But even then she could gain her ends only by forcing privation on her own people, careful state control of her limited resources, the dumping of cheap goods, and recourse to barter, all carefully planned in detail by totalitarian methods to suit military ends.

With her increasing success in winning markets, and the often excellent value for money which her manufactures represented, Japan lost much of her old inferiority complex. To the past belonged the temptation to pass off

her goods as of German make. I well remember a relic of this false modesty in circumstances so obvious as to border on the ludicrous. I was a passenger on a large Japanese liner bound for the United States and we were just about to sail from Yokohama. Hardly had the forest of paper streamers that had formed a last link with Japan been severed, and the last banzai ceased to echo, than we were ushered into the spacious modern saloon. There our Japanese hosts, in their slightly overanxious eagerness to welcome their American and European patrons, had already prepared a gala meal, complete with balloons and Christmas crackers. The clearly Japanese-made crackers, no doubt intended for use not on an N.Y.K. liner within sight of Yokohama but in some more distant and less critical market, were each plainly stamped with the words "Made in Germany."

The range and utility of cheap Japanese goods amazed every foreigner in the East. These wares alone have made it possible for the poorly paid Asiatic or Eurasian to satisfy wants implanted by the influence of the West, but which the West could not provide at his price. And indeed what European or American housewife was there who, prior to the Chinese boycott and general revulsion of feeling against the Japanese, was not glad of the convenient native shop where she knew she could get many household requisites that proved in practice almost as good as anything the large European stores had to offer at many times the price? Certainly it was hard to appreciate the superior merits of the thermos flask, of nicer appearance and better workmanship, of course, condescendingly offered by

the highly paid white salesman at perhaps ten times the price of its Japanese counterpart. Both performed the basic function of keeping water cold. Both were equally likely to be dropped next day by a careless Chinese or Indian servant on the stone pantry floor. And where was the thermos flask that was proof against that?

I recall one instance which strikingly illustrates the ability of the Japanese merchant to satisfy the newborn desire of the simple Asiatic peasants to possess the trappings of Western civilization. I happened to be traveling in a very remote part of eastern Siam. I had made a stay of several weeks at a very poor village whose inhabitants were peasant proprietors whose small rice holdings lay scattered around. They had very few domestic or other possessions apart from what they themselves could make, but during my stay they came to admire and perhaps covet various articles of my equipment, including my boots. They had practically no use for money except to pay the annual \$2.50 poll tax, which they sold a little rice to obtain. They never worked for hire, and it was only out of a species of chivalry that they agreed to put themselves and their bullock carts at my disposal when the time came for me to continue my journey. Each man, to the number of a dozen, drove his own bullock cart.

After a four-day journey I reached my destination—a little town which, although still far from anywhere, already boasted a small Japanese general store. Naturally I pressed upon my drivers a suitable monetary reward. Its receipt coincided happily with the discovery of the Japanese store. Within an hour every cent had been transferred

to the amiable merchant and a miraculously transformed procession set out on the homeward trek. Not a man, whose original kit had consisted only of a worn homespun sarong, but was now proudly equipped in a European-style felt hat, sun glasses, and canvas shoes. So, after all, money had other uses besides the payment of taxes!

The ability to acquire American- and European-made articles has been limited to a woefully restricted stratum of Asiatic society. The policy, notable in the huge Dutch East Indian market, of educating the native to desire expensive European goods could not but fail in view of the counterbalancing necessity of keeping wages low enough to make the extraction of colonial raw materials a profitable undertaking. In the colonies the erection of a tariff wall could to some extent stave off the worst effects of Japanese competition. But even were that to be entirely eliminated as a result of Japanese defeat in war, it would be useless to close one's eyes to the fact that the problem is wider and more deep-seated than that. There are already trends that show that industrialization and the supply of their own home markets' basic needs will be a post-war aim of the leading Asiatic countries.

Unlike the easy-going peoples of southeastern Asia, both Chinese and Indians are capable of the sustained labor that makes industrialization possible. Only in India has the existence of stable government so far encouraged any considerable development in that direction. The first Indian community to seek a share in Western commercial pursuits was that of the Parsis, who form a large and wealthy portion of the population of the Bombay and

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Surat districts. The achievements of the Tata family are the most remarkable and include the construction in 1913 of the great Hydro Electric Works supplying power to Bombay, the internal Indian air services, and of course the huge Tata Steel and Iron Works on the Bengal border. Already before the war this was a center of a ring of industries which produced tin plate, agricultural implements, jute machinery, enamel ware, locomotive parts, and so forth. These works were started with American encouragement and the first managers were Americans, later replaced by Indians.

But it was when the Hindu moneylenders realized that the backing of native industry would provide a better return for their capital than the grinding down of the peasants that the fate of British textile exports to India was sealed. Being protected by tariffs from Japanese inroads, the Indian textiles easily ousted the products of Manchester. The huge cotton-mill industry is centered in Bombay and Ahmedabad. There are no less than 389 mills with about 10,000,000 spindles and 200,000 looms.

After cotton, India's most important crop is jute, mostly grown in Bengal. This was first spun and woven in English factories in India, but in the middle of the last century the industry was transferred to Dundee, to continental Europe, and to America. But early this century came the expansion of the mill industry in India. In 1909 Indian mills for the first time consumed more jute than did the foreign ones, and they kept ahead by reducing costs and increasing working hours.

Normally about half of India's cotton and jute crops

are exported raw. The cotton, being of a type mostly suited for cheap quality textiles, went largely to Japan. But this loss of foreign markets for the raw material since the war began in the East has been in part compensated by increased demands for manufactured products. A new export trade to Australia, New Zealand, and other countries of the Eastern Group sprang up, including orders by the East African market for cotton blankets formerly made in Europe. In jute manufactures an outstanding development has been the huge demand for sandbags.

The effect of the war on Indian industry is nowhere better seen than in the organization of the country as a great munition supply center for Eastern Group countries. The object of this was of course to relieve the strain on Allied factories and shipping. It was facilitated by India's mineral wealth, although extraction was very backward owing to India's distance from American and European industrial centers. Despite the vast untapped reserves of coal, especially in the Bengal-Bihar region, production at the beginning of the war was only twenty-five million tons. Similarly, though India has the greatest resources of high-grade iron ore in the world, the extraction of ore is only about three million tons a year. In that important adjunct of the iron and steel industry, manganese, India accounts for about one-third of the world's output. She is rich in mica, bauxite, chromite, and other minerals important to industry, but the quantity extracted is often small and gives no idea of the country's potential supply.

With the object of putting Indian industry on a war footing, not only were railroad workshops converted to

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ordnance factories throughout the country, to supply to some extent the lack of an automobile industry, but many privately owned factories and workshops were similarly adapted. Native industrialists, never averse to making money and in the main uninfluenced by the internal political questions of the day, took advantage of the boom and were in many cases helped with capital by the government. Among other work they were entrusted with the making of shells and fuses. The great firm of Tatas installed a new blast furnace, one of the largest in the world, with a daily production of 1,700 tons. They are responsible for the greater part of India's total production of pig iron, which was 1,838,000 tons at the beginning of the war. The output of steel ingots and finished steel has been steadily rising. The needs of the war industries have also involved the provision of thousands of machine tools, and Tatas alone have been making 50,000 a month. The object of the recent Grady mission was to study methods by which America could aid in speeding Indian industrialization.

Indian labor is backward in organization and lacking in leadership. What has been done for the welfare of the workers has been done purely by legislation. There has been considerable planned opposition to the war effort on the part of the promoters of civil disobedience. But this may have been offset to some extent by the influence of the Indian Communist Party which is strong in the cities and has recently, through Russia's good offices, been led to throw its weight on the side of convincing the Indian workers that this is a "people's war." In any case, the ex-



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pansion of Indian industry speaks for itself. As with the army, there has been no great difficulty in raising and training workers and skilled artisans. And whatever the immediate fate of India, the existence of so many skilled fitters, grinders, and turners is bound to have its influence on Indian economy after the war. Gandhi's views to the contrary, it is known that such leaders as Nehru favor industrialization as the basis on which a free India can be established as a world power. Certainly if India escapes invasion her financial position will be strong for, by virtue of her sales of war material, she has now virtually wiped off all her indebtedness to Britain.

Let us now glance at the possibilities for China. Long in the position of a semi-colony, exploited by everyone under the Open Door policy, her tariff limited to a 5 per cent ad valorem duty, she was in a worse position than any other country to resist the evil effects of an influx of cheap Japanese goods on her essential village industries. The bankers and merchants of the China coast had been obliged to throw in their lot with the white man. As with the overseas Chinese, they had found that in the circumstances the best use they could make of their capital was as middlemen and agents of the great European firms. Where there was peace and security, as at Singapore and Saigon, these industrious merchants developed into a wealthy and influential community. Yet it is perhaps significant of future possibilities, should the Chinese, like the Indian moneylenders, then turn to industry, that the richest of the Straits Chinese, the famous Aw Boon Haw, rose from rickshaw coolie to millionaire in direct compe-

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tition with European interests. He made his fortune from Tiger Balm, which, despite the flood of foreign patent medicines, rapidly gained an amazing popularity with his fellow countrymen.

China has already imbibed from America something of the spirit of capitalist enterprise; and Manchuria and North China are rich in raw materials. With the return of these territories after the war, and the establishment of a stable government, some of China's westernized leaders, such as T. V. Soong, will certainly look to industrialization as the rock upon which to establish the New China as a leader in Asia.

As in India so in China the people are mainly poor agriculturists, but the war years have proved a great incentive to the expansion of China's budding industries. In order to escape destruction by the advancing Japanese, these had in many cases to be transported bodily, at short notice, as much as two thousand miles to western China. Machinery had to be carried part by part by the most primitive means, such as in river barges, on mules, and by porters. China has less than thirty miles of railroad per million of population, and this lack of up-to-date transportation is perhaps the greatest obstacle to China's rapid postwar industrialization. She cannot but start at a distinct disadvantage here as compared with India.

However, as is the case with India also, China has the enormous asset of huge coal reserves, estimated at 250,000,000,000 tons, and iron reserves of nearly treble this amount, which would last her for an indefinite period. Of antimony and tungsten she possesses almost a world mo-

nopoly. She has, of course, an inexhaustable supply of labor, and like India is making progress in the training of artisans.

With an invader actually occupying so many of her richest provinces, it is easily understandable that China has not been able to develop her war production to the extent that India has. The latter country can now make most of her requirements, except marine engines, aircraft, and tanks, and has a large exportable surplus of many types of ammunition. China is much more dependent on outside help. Yet she has in steady production no less than 317 machine shops, 44 electrical-equipment factories, and 381 chemical plants making alum, liquid fuel, rubber, drugs, leather, soap, and other accessories. There are many rice mills, canneries, and sugar refineries, and no less than 273 textile plants and clothing factories in Free China. Annual production of many commodities has increased from twofold to as much as a hundredfold since the war began.

Chinese capitalists are getting every encouragement from the Central government, but in such a large country much has to depend on the attitude of the provincial administrations. These have been equally active in furthering development. Progress has been marked in Kiangsi, Kweichow, and Shensi. Kwantung's record is also remarkable, for it has recently established eight big factories and another fifteen are scheduled to open soon. They include machine works, chemical plants, and textile mills. Kwangsi has begun the large-scale planting of castor oil intended to produce alcohol as a substitute for gasoline,

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a most urgent requirement in China. Among the entirely new industries that have been started during the war years may be mentioned the production of telephone sets, radio receiving and transmitting sets, electric lamp bulbs and batteries.

Once the war is over, and Manchuria and the northern provinces with their raw-material wealth are returned to China, Dr. Soong is of opinion that she could treble her productive power in a dozen years. When the necessity for concentrating on armaments or goods more or less directly concerned with defense has been removed, China, like India, will be able to produce goods primarily intended to improve the lot of her own people. First place will probably be given to the production of food and clothing. Only then will the question arise of establishing such heavy industries as ship and aircraft building, steel and automobile production, which are all clearly warranted by the country's raw-material reserves. At the same time a machine-tool industry will have to be built up. Only then will it be possible to consider the manufacture of goods for export, especially those using minerals such as tungsten and antimony of which, as already mentioned, China has almost a world monopoly.

Then there are the Chinese Industrial Co-operatives, a great source of China's wartime industrial strength and an omen for the future. At present they are occupied by the manufacture of small arms, small-bore ammunition, clothing, and a hundred and one other minor necessities for carrying on the war, for which China would otherwise have to depend on Lease-Lend. Spread all over Free

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China, often quite near the front lines where they are most wanted, and ready to move forward or backward at a moment's notice, are thousands of little industrial plants, which make use so far as possible of whatever raw material happens to be most ready to hand. Essentially mobile, they are always carefully camouflaged against air attack. They came into being four years ago before there had yet been time to get into production the industries transplanted to the west from the northern provinces, and while foreign help was quite insufficient to enable China to carry on the war alone. It was an American missionary, Joseph Bailie, who succeeded in interesting Henry Ford in making funds available for the first batch of trained engineers, while the British ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr, also gave every encouragement. A widespread organization sprang from this beginning, which not only saved China in the hour of her direst need but has familiarized millions of peasants with the idea of modern industrialization. Many who have found in it a means of escape from a scant agricultural living will not be anxious to retire from the new age of machinery to which the war has been their introduction.

But industrialization cannot be looked upon as an immediate cure for the poverty that has beset the vast populations of India and China in the past. To whatever extent it is developed, the vast mass of people must remain agriculturists. Their leaders have already indicated that they realize that side by side with industrial expansion there must be improvement in agricultural methods, as well as control of world prices for the products they have to sell.

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While the masses remain at bare subsistence level or below, while they continue to be at the mercy of famine, pestilence and the moneylender, obviously there will be no such market for home manufactures as a large, prosperous farming population would provide. The Chinese Central government, even while preoccupied with the war, already has this problem very much at heart, and it is said that crop improvement under government control is producing very encouraging results. Given this parallel rural development, there is no doubt but that industrialization can do a great deal to establish the economic independence of China and India.

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FROM THE evidences of Asia-wide striving to be rid of white rule, and the unwillingness of the Asiatics to commit themselves in advance as to the type of free government they would set up, it will be refreshing and perhaps instructive to see what use Siam, a country that had previously occupied a semicolonial status, did make of her opportunities during the few years she enjoyed something approaching real political freedom. In particular—did democracy, elsewhere clutched at by Asiatics mainly as a weapon for attaining independence, make any appeal on its own merits, before Siam, like the rest of East Asia, was temporarily blotted out by Japan?

So firmly did Siam remain in the grip of old-world conditions until recent years that at the beginning of this book I conjured up a picture of the country as I had first known it, by way of emphasizing the contrast between those days and these in the so-called “unchanging East.” I tried to recapture something of the atmosphere of a paternal despotism, the monarch’s absolute power largely usurped by autocratic princes; of exotic court ceremonial, luxurious

palace life, and a medievalism that was made bearable for the agricultural masses by the fact that these rulers were, judged by old standards, by no means unenlightened and that Siam is a fertile land where famine is unknown. And I rather suggested that the foreign powers, while commending the snail-like pace of the improvements handed out from above, were in fact content, in this latter age of imperialism, to see what remained of Siam after successive dismemberments left as a harmless buffer state which could be safely exploited commercially while no risk was run of unwanted international complications.

The reasons usually given for the downfall in 1932 of the regime that had conducted itself so satisfactorily from the point of view of foreign vested interests are misleading, for they fail to relate the event to the widespread campaign for freedom that was agitating Asia at the time. The Siamese revolution should not be regarded as an isolated occurrence, due to such minor stimulants as the economies to which the king was obliged to resort to make up for his predecessor's extravagance, to the imposition on all officials but the princes of a salary tax during the depression, or to the unjustifiable expenditure on the purchase of Diesel locomotives at a time when many government employees were being discharged from office. Undoubtedly the depression brought matters to a head, just as it vastly increased the troubles of the neighboring colonial governments, but the underlying cause must be found in the rise of nationalism resulting from the spread of education. It brought a realization not only that the princes were not acting in the best interests of the country but



that the real power behind them, the white man's support and connivance, was on the wane.

We can in fact trace the beginnings of nationalism in Siam, as in other Asiatic countries, much further back than 1932. In 1910 a certain number of malcontents, impressed by Japan's meteoric rise, chose the occasion of King Vajiravudh's coronation to hatch a plot aimed at abolishing the absolute monarchy. They had so arranged that the ceremonial cannon mounted on the palace wall, and fired at the moment of the king's crowning, were loaded with ball shot and turned round to face the throne hall in which the rites were proceeding. This rather childish effort, which differed only from the traditional type of palace plot by reason of its motivation, was nipped in the bud. The conspirators were condemned to spend the rest of their lives in jail, but the survivors were shown clemency by King Prajadhipok on his accession. One even had the satisfaction of being appointed a member, though an inconspicuous one, of the People's Assembly in 1932.

In the second decade of the century the princes, pressed by the need for more Western-educated men to run the increasingly complicated administration, though determined to retain the real power in their own hands, were obliged to send numbers of young commoners for advanced training in Europe or America. During the 1920's these young men, their heads filled with new ideas on government and aware of the nationalist movements in India and elsewhere, were returning in force. They were disappointed with the positions offered to them and could not

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resign themselves to vegetating without real responsibility in an administration which they saw was badly in need of reform. The extent to which the princes remained dependent on foreign brains appalled them. They were staggered by the expenditure of money on showy display while foreign corporations and Chinese middlemen drained away the country's wealth.

At the same time these young Western-educated men were shocked by the arrogant behavior of the princes. Can one be surprised that students fresh from Oxford and Harvard were sickened at the sight of Siamese servants groveling on their bellies before their masters, a practice which, though abolished in public, was still rigidly adhered to in princely households? It did not escape them either that the rural masses were denied anything but the rudiments of monastic education and were regarded by the government mainly as the necessary machinery for getting in the rice crop.

The prime mover in the 1932 revolution was a brilliant thirty-year-old lawyer named Pradist, who on his return from France had been appointed to an unsatisfying university post. In appearance an ordinary, good-natured young Siamese, there yet burned in his bright eyes the fire of a deep purpose. As the movement was not a popular one, he and his fellow conspirators could not depend on the support of the people. Hence Pradist was obliged to take into his confidence the military so as to assure himself of the force necessary to carry through his project. He thus unwittingly took a step that was ultimately to have

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dire consequences for his country's future. Colonel Bahol, the second in command of the army, was willing to cooperate.

Before dawn on June 24, 1932, the revolutionaries struck. The awed populace were awakened by the sound of tanks and armored cars patrolling the Bangkok streets. Within an hour or two all the leading princes were prisoners in the Throne Hall. The first to be secured was Prince Paribatra, half-brother of the king and at once the most hated and the most powerful member of the royal family. He had been Minister of the Interior, and it is said that on the very day before the outbreak he had been presented by the chief of police with a full list of the conspirators. But he had refused to believe in the possibility of such a plot and so had scorned to act.

Colonel Bahol, who had led the troops in the coup, was an older man than Pradist but had also had the benefit of a period of study in Europe. Being a commoner, despite his important position, he had not been able to rise above the rank of colonel—for only princes were ever made generals. Neither Bahol nor any of the other military leaders had any intention at this time of taking advantage of their material strength to give the new government an unduly military bias. They were relieved to find that having ousted the princes they were faced with no further opposition. While arrangements were made for sending the princes into exile, the king, who had been on holiday at the seaside, was invited to return and reign as a constitutional monarch. That the people continued to remain

quiet probably was largely due to his decision to remain in office. If he was satisfied, so were they.

The leaders thereupon proclaimed the formation of a so-called People's Party and issued a manifesto setting forth the party's program as follows:

(1) The freedom and equality of the people in politics, in the law courts, and in business, must be maintained.

(2) Peace and quiet, with no harm to anyone, must be assured.

(3) A national economic policy must be drawn up to provide remunerative work for everyone.

(4) Equal privilege for everyone must be guaranteed. No one group shall enjoy special privilege at the expense of the others.

(5) The people shall have freedom and liberty except in those cases where freedom and liberty disagree with the above four points.

(6) The people must be given the most complete education possible.

The next thing was to establish a People's Assembly. Since the masses were not yet interested, the leaders decided to appoint the first members. But it was laid down that as soon as possible half the members were to be elected, and that when half the voting population reached a certain elementary standard of education *all* the Assembly members were to be elected. *In any case the Assembly was to become fully elective after ten years.* Hence the leaders, like Sun Yat-sen in China, had recognized the necessity of a period of tutelage during which the inten-

sive education of the people was to be undertaken. But neither in China nor in Siam did the leaders hold that preparation of the masses for self-rule must be an endlessly long drawn-out process, such as would lead many people to doubt if it ever would become effective.

Having gone through these promising preliminaries, the Siamese revolutionaries, though some like Pradist himself were clever theorists, felt too inexperienced to take over the government. So they asked seventy well-disposed civil servants of the old regime, only a third of whom had studied in Europe, to become the founding members of the People's Assembly. An experienced supreme court judge named Mano was chosen as premier. He selected fourteen members to form the first State Council, among which were included Pradist, Bahol, and several other revolutionary leaders, who, however, preferred to remain without portfolio.

Having approved the six-point program of the leaders, the Assembly appointed a committee to draw up a constitution, the first section of which stated that the "supreme power of the country is in the hands of the citizens." However, when I visited Bangkok at the close of 1932 it seemed to me that, though the princes had gone, the king was in his palace and everything was going on much as usual. Commoners had replaced the princes in ministerial office, but as the policy seemed much the same I was faintly amused when a Siamese friend took me to task for speaking of the Minister of Justice. "You mean the State Councillor for Justice," he corrected. "We are democratic now and don't have ministers." About the same time Pradist

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and other leaders knelt before the king to ask his forgiveness for any indiscretions they might have committed during the revolutionary period. Lest one be inclined to attach too much importance to this incident, however, be it added that the Siamese are a courteous people. The Siamese executioner also kneels and asks the forgiveness of the criminal he is about to decapitate.

The prevailing peace proved to be but the calm before the storm. For several months Pradist had been busying himself with the entertaining task of drawing up a "national economic policy" in accordance with the third point of the People's Party's program. In March, 1933, the plan was ready and a committee headed by Mano was appointed to study it. The main provision was for the nationalization of all farming land. This was not to be expropriated but acquired by the government by purchase—for bonds, however, not for cash. The farmers, that is to say the whole mass of the country's population who, as in India, are almost all peasants, were then to be employed by the government to farm the land scientifically for a fixed salary and pension. But not much money would have been needed to finance the plan, as the workers were to be required to buy from government-owned stores. The selling of the rice was to be in government hands so that the Chinese middleman could be eliminated.

It did not take the committee members long to realize that the plan was communistic, though Pradist denied this. He said, "My policy includes points selected from many economic theories, which I have coordinated to fit the needs of Siam." This eclectic attitude of mind is worth

noting because it is likely to be that of other Asiatic leaders once they are free to concentrate on planning comprehensively for the future. It was scarcely likely that communism, which was proving so fascinating to many nationalists in neighboring countries at that time, should have escaped Pradist's notice. And in fairness to him, his plan has to be studied against the background of the then prevailing economic depression, although its effects were being felt less severely in Siam than in other countries of southeastern Asia.

Though the majority of the committee was brave enough to favor giving the plan a trial, Premier Mano, nourished in the conservative tradition, was dead against it. He had good practical reasons for this. He was well aware with what severity Britain, France, and Holland had suppressed communism in their colonies. They would never tolerate a government in Siam that was even faintly tainted with its doctrines. They would be certain to realize that the new government was just as intent on ridding the country of the foreign stranglehold on tin and teak as they were in displacing the Chinese middlemen and improving the condition of the peasants. There had been acute fear of foreign intervention at the time of the revolution. In fact, the king had given as one of his reasons for accepting the leaders' invitation his desire to spare the country embroilment with the foreign powers. Now this communistic plan of Pradist would precipitate the dread disaster, or so it appeared to Mano. Actually Pradist was probably nearer the mark when he fearlessly gave it as his opinion that if the foreign governments had not

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stepped in at the time of the revolution they would be no more inclined to intervene now. His powers of observation were no doubt sufficiently acute to enable him to appreciate that the European governments, whose grip on their own colonies was everywhere slipping, would be averse to embarking on new adventures.'

On April 1, 1933, the favorable majority report was submitted to the Assembly. It was then seen that opposition had grown. Mano's view that the plan was communistic, and therefore dangerous, had found wide support. A serious split on the issue developed, and Mano, holding the independence of the country was endangered, closed the Assembly. An act was passed outlawing communism, and Mano handed back to the king the sole control of state affairs. By the middle of the month Pradist had sailed for Europe, ostensibly for a vacation. Except that the princes, to the regret of few, had disappeared from the stage, everything was as it had been before the revolution. To the interested foreign observer it seemed that the easy-going Siamese had grown tired of their experiment. The good old days were back!

But such was not to be. In the middle of June, just two months after Pradist's departure, Colonel Bahol and other friends of Pradist decided that they must act if all they had accomplished was not to be undone by Mano's retrograde action. They resigned from their appointments on grounds of ill health and, observing the regret with which this move was received by the Bangkok populace, felt strong enough to act. On June 20 army trucks and tanks once more rumbled through the streets of Bangkok. This



time it was Mano and his conservative supporters who were arrested and shortly afterwards banished.

Colonel Bahol, having again seized control, determined to take no more risks. His chief aide was a young colonel named Pibul who, like Pradist, had been educated in France. Though he had been a member of the first State Council he had not previously been prominent. Together they got the king to re-convene the People's Assembly. Bahol was elected premier; but again feeling the disadvantage of lack of experience, while maintaining control of the situation himself, he decided this time to call to his assistance two or three of the more brilliant younger princes, notably Prince Varnvaidya. They were willing to cooperate for they had had little for which to thank the senior princes under the old regime.

Despite the failure of the Mano attempt to restore power to the king, there were many supporters of the old order who had not yet given up hope of staging a come back. They plotted to try force, which they had seen the revolutionaries use to such good effect. Their plans were hastened by the return of Pradist to Siam in September. It was a case of now or never. So a month later Prince Bovaradej, the former Minister of Defense, who had somehow contrived to remain in Siam, raised a rebellion in the provinces and marched on Bangkok at the head of troops stationed in certain garrison towns. He seized the airdrome a few miles to the north of the capital and flew over the city dropping leaflets. These urged the government to surrender, in default of which he would take the city by storm. The government stood firm and, as the roy-

alist forces lacked artillery, Bovaradej was quite unable to carry out his threat.

The general public enjoyed the excitement, surging out of the city to watch the fighting in the rice fields on the outskirts, among them most of the European community in their cars. It proved a relatively safe pastime since all the artillery was on the government side. Those who had field glasses could watch the shells bursting in the rebel lines. Everyone wondered how long they would hold on. The suspense was soon over. After three days the besiegers lost heart and began a retreat. They were pursued and dispersed by the government forces, while Prince Bovaradej, piloting his airplane, took refuge in Indo-China.

As a direct consequence of this second failure King Prajadhipok, in January, 1934, decided to leave for America and Europe, the ready excuse being found that his eyes needed operative treatment. In March, 1935, he abdicated without returning to the country. He himself had never been opposed to democratic reform. He believed it to be in the best interests of Siam for his place to be taken by the young Prince Ananda, a schoolboy in Switzerland, who would be unable to embarrass the government during the period of transition. This arrangement appealed to the government, who knew what a strong hold the kingship, regardless of who actually filled the office, still had on the masses. It would give them time to educate the people up to appreciating their rights and responsibilities.

Pradist's brains were badly needed by the new government. But since Bahol, as soon as he became premier, had given out that he personally abhorred communism, and

the other leaders were adopting a more guarded attitude since the Bovaradej rebellion, it was necessary to clear Pradist of the stigma that had resulted from his plan. So early in 1934 a curious inquiry into his alleged communism was instituted. The government caused a special commission to be appointed for the purpose, and with great perspicacity saw to it that it should have the benefit of the advice of two foreign jurists, one a Frenchman, the other Sir Robert Holland, a retired Indian civil servant engaged by the Siamese government in 1933 as a legal adviser. The commission resolved unanimously that Pradist was clear of any stigma of communism.

However, nothing more was heard of Pradist's economic plan. Instead the government gave its attention to such innocuous reforms as the extension of the Co-operative Credit System, and the speeding up of improvements in communications and irrigation, all of which had been contemplated or initiated under the absolute monarchy. Yet, while recognizing that they must avoid for the time being any more fundamental changes in policy, they set themselves without further delay to inaugurating a democratic form of government. After all, this was the main basis of the revolution, and now the more educated portion of the public, in Bangkok at least, were eagerly expecting developments in this line.

Within two months of the suppression of the royalist rebellion the first general election for the People's Assembly was held. That is to say, seventy-eight members were elected, an equal number being appointed, nominally by the king, and Colonel Bahol was confirmed as

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premier. The election of the people's representatives was not, however, direct, but was carried out by district representatives who had been previously elected by the people. This had proved a farce. In some districts not one per cent of the eligible voters went to the polls, as they had no idea what it was all about. But in the end, somehow, the people's representatives got elected. Though some were in fact additional government appointees and the rest scarcely represented anybody, these did introduce an entirely new and healthy element into the situation. For the first time a Siamese government freely laid itself open to criticism, and the newspapers began to be filled with accounts of debates which reflected the enthusiasm, as well as the inexperience, of the new members.

Had the revolutionary leaders been purely selfish they might now have rested on their laurels and decided that no more could be done, adopting "the time is not ripe" mentality. Instead, they recognized that real national strength and the future independence of the country could only be assured if the cause of the failure of the elections, lack of popular education, was remedied as soon as possible. They set about intensively to rectify the deficiency throughout the country. Even when later they began to pile up armaments, appropriations for education continued to be second only to expenditure on defense.

At the same time the government launched a program for the practical preparation of the people for self-rule. In the old days only village headmen had been popularly elected, in imitation of the Burma village system which the British had inaugurated there. Now a system was in-

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roduced early in 1934 by which the people were to be trained for municipal self-government in the towns and for rural district self-government in the villages. Local assemblies, like the central one only partly elective at first, were established at each center. To assist the people in working the scheme the local officials of the old type were to be gradually replaced by young men trained in the new University of Moral and Political Sciences founded by Pradist. As a first step highly ornate copies of the constitution were prepared and sent out to every town and village throughout the country as a harbinger of things to come.

The magnitude of the task that the government had so bravely shouldered was never more apparent to me than when, one day in 1935, while traveling in a remote part of central Siam I happened to camp at a little village that had just received its copy of the constitution. While my tent was being pitched on the edge of the dry rice fields I strolled into the village, just as the document arrived by messenger from the provincial governor. The village headman understood that he was to call the people together and read to them the contents. However, as he himself was barely literate there was some delay while a man was found who could read it. I watched the expressions of the assembled peasants as they listened unemotionally. Faces remained blank and uncomprehending. The meaning entirely escaped them. The elders eventually decided that the village had in some way deserved a special mark of royal esteem, perhaps because they had been law abiding and regular in paying their taxes. With one accord they

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raised their joined palms to their foreheads on the conclusion of the reading, in token of respect. The document was reverently placed on a lacquer bowl (the village possessed nothing more valuable), raised on a litter, and carried off to be deposited in the temple. After this pleasant but quite meaningless interlude, men's thoughts drifted back to the serious business of harvesting the rice. It was clear that there was to be ample scope during the coming years for the known ability of the educated Siamese in harmonizing the new ideas of the West with the deep-rooted convictions of the Orient.

Such a situation could no doubt be closely paralleled in any Chinese village, at least until the war had aroused some political consciousness; and the same applies to India where the ryots took no interest in the provincial elections and where their attitude toward government is summed up in the phrase *Dilli dur ast* (It's a far cry to Delhi). Yet the success of Gandhi's line of approach, though as yet applied only with the object of harnessing the people to a political mass movement, shows what can be done by those possessed of the power of judicious adaptation and an understanding of the oriental mind.

While the Siamese government was taking these practical steps to introduce democracy, it was at the same time strengthening its own position against any further attempts to interfere with its unhampered control of the country during the period of transition. Having further distinguished himself in the suppression of the Boveradej revolt, Colonel Pibul at the age of thirty-seven had become State Councillor for Defense. From that time the

civil leaders had been obliged to acquiesce in the strengthening of the military group within the People's Party, and no less than two-thirds of the appointed members of the Assembly were henceforth soldiers.

Yet it would probably be unfair to impute fascist leanings to the government at this stage. There were three attempts on the life of Pibul during the first year or so following his appointment to the defense post, showing that the spirit of the old regime was far from dead. The government could not afford to take risks. It was merely attempting to avoid the period of bloodshed that Nehru has envisaged as likely to follow the advent of freedom in India. In China Chiang Kai-shek is now employing, and no doubt will for some time continue to employ, authoritarian methods of rule in order to prevent a split on communism or a relapse into provincial war-lordism. In Siam, while there was a rigid press and radio censorship, criticism of the government continued to be permitted in the Assembly. Anyone familiar with the easy-going, pleasure-loving disposition of the Siamese, their history and attachment to Buddhism, will know that they are averse to the maintenance of a militarist regime except at critical junctures and for limited periods.

When all due allowance is made, however, it became increasingly obvious after the abdication of King Prajadhipok that conditions were favorable for a swing over to fascism, both in view of the success that seemed to be attending that system in Europe and much more on account of the growing influence of Japan. Probably it would be correct to say that it was from the spring of 1936 that these

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external influences achieved the ascendancy. Following up increased trade penetration, Japan sent a trade mission to Siam in March of that year. From then on the newspapers devoted much space to descriptions of conditions in Japan. Boy Scouts were sent on a friendly mission to Japan and when they came back were transformed into the nucleus of a military youth movement.

Shortly afterwards it became apparent that Pibul was aiming at dictatorship. A handsome man of vacillating character, he gloried in being in the public eye and needed only a little encouragement to put self before country. But the dictatorship idea seemed at first to have only the tentative support of Prince Varnvaidya who, as adviser to the Foreign Office (his princely rank prevented him from actually holding a portfolio), wielded immense influence. A few years older than Pibul, this sleek individual hid his crafty and calculating intentions behind the suave manner of the typical Oxford graduate. I knew him personally though we seldom discussed political matters. However, one remark that he made to me just about the time affairs were at the turning point remains in my memory.

"We have the situation well in hand, but it needs careful watching," he said. Certainly during the following years no political situation received more catlike watching by a more wily statesman. From day to day and month to month Prince Varnvaidya weighed and pondered its possibilities and dangers, keeping the foreign diplomats guessing as to the role that Siam would ultimately play, while the government sheltered behind official pronouncements that she only wanted to be left alone. It seems



strange to think that in the critical years that were to decide Siam's fate that country's guiding genius was to be a prince after all!

The Siamese leaders watched the advance of Japan in China with interest, the failure of the European colonial governments to prepare a strong and coordinated defense, and drew deductions accordingly. They were impressed by Japanese flattery too. They liked the way in which Japan encouraged, instead of trying to repress, their new-born spirit of nationalism and their hankering for the return of territory in Indo-China. Indeed, they were delighted with all the blandishments with which Japan tries to soften her intended victims, a subject I touch on in the next chapter. They liked the kind of advice Japan was prepared to give about improving port facilities for the new warships Japan was willing to supply. Japan helped them also with their incipient industrialization so that they were able to build the long-contemplated paper factory and sugar refinery—since, though they had ample raw material, they had always been obliged to buy the finished product from abroad. They could dispense with the last European advisers, and the idea of an Asia for the Asiatics was most appealing.

At the end of 1937 the government was able to negotiate new treaties with the United States and the European powers. These at last did away with all suggestions of inferiority, a great stimulus to the national pride. They even got so far as to tackle the thorny problem of the European-owned teak and tin concessions, renewing the leases only on less favorable terms. But it was a year

later, following the Munich display, that the seal was really set on the situation. Pibul became premier, displacing the moderate Colonel Bahol who was now honorably retired with the title of Elder Statesman. Pibul was soon to assume the rank of general, as commander-in-chief and virtual dictator. At the same time Pradist, who as leader of the liberal group within the Party was losing influence, was transferred from the post of State Councillor for Foreign Affairs to State Councillor for Finance. He produced a new Revenue Code designed to transfer the main burden of taxation onto the foreign business houses, thus making it difficult for them to continue to operate, and paving the way for state-controlled industry. Prince Varnvaidya, whose ever increasing influence behind the scenes was indicated by his new title of Adviser to the Presidency of the State Council, was now free to pursue a policy that ultimately led to direct negotiations with Japan.

Popular dissatisfaction with the trend of events was shown by the appearance of the previously nonexistent desire to form new political parties in addition to the People's Party. Any such requests were refused, the postponement for another ten years of the fully elective character of the Assembly was announced, and with ever increasing frequency plots aimed at the overthrow of the government were uncovered. The leaders were latterly obliged to rely on their screen of tanks, armored cars, and Japanese experts for personal protection. But only after the Japanese actually marched in, following Pearl Harbor, was the now meaningless People's Assembly finally abolished.

Any picture of this experimental period in Siam would

be incomplete if it omitted the renaissance of religion and culture that accompanied it, sadly perverted though it came to be in Japanese hands. Admittedly, very soon after the first revolutionary stroke, the atmosphere of court ceremonial, the old Hindu usages that had surrounded the kingship, perished with the old regime. In India it is not the outdated though picturesque and interesting ritual that hangs like a cloud around the courts of the maharajas, but the revival of the old culture as a living force brought about by such popular leaders as Gandhi that is of real significance. In Siam one of the first acts of the revolutionary leaders was to stress that there was to be no interference with the monastic Order. In addition, emphasis was laid on the value of Buddhism in everyday life.

On the crest of the wave of this cultural rebirth a number of young Siamese intellectuals, educated in Europe, devoted themselves to the study and adaptation of Buddhism to the needs of the day. In particular, a student returning from France, named Vichitr, a friend of the revolutionary leaders, had already published in 1931 a book in which he accepted the validity of the ancient belief in the Buddha as a supernatural being which was proved, he said, by the Buddha's ability to work miracles. He advocated a mystical though purified conception of the religion, one that could be appreciated by the average Siamese. Vichitr's teachings may thus be considered to parallel those of Gandhi in India. Nevertheless, though in themselves perfectly legitimate, it is necessary to remark that it was just these doctrines that lent themselves to abuse and perversion in the hands of the Japanese propa-

gandists. In fact, it was this Vichitr who from 1936 onwards, as Director of the Royal Institute of Fine Arts, lent his knowledge and ability to the adaptation and spread of Japanese cultural propaganda.

Meanwhile there was another modern school of religious thought, perhaps comparable to those espoused by some other up-to-date Indian and Chinese political leaders. This school was led by no less able young intellectuals who were at pains to rationalize Buddhism. They attempted to restore, so far as is possible, the original teachings of the Buddha, somewhat on the lines followed by the noted English scholar, Mrs. Rhys Davids. Some of these Siamese thinkers endeavored to present him as a scientist, a psychologist, as one whose ideas and teachings stood the test of modern science. Christianity and other religions continued to be tolerated under the new regime. But the tendency here as elsewhere in Asia was, with a renewed assurance derived from their supposed mastery of Western materialism, to reaffirm faith in their own religion and culture.

So far as Siam's effort to introduce some form of democracy during this experimental period is concerned, we are obliged to conclude that it was a failure. But, since the *intention* to introduce democracy as the basis for the people's attainment of real freedom did at one time exist, and as it left a legacy among many of desire for democracy, we can add that it was not a *hopeless* failure.

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## JAPAN'S CULTURAL WEAPON

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BESIDES ECONOMIC penetration and espionage, Japan's preparations for the conquests, which have temporarily blocked Asia's quest for freedom, included another formidable weapon. This was the carefully coordinated system of propaganda by means of which she sought to win the support of other Asiatics for her "Co-Prosperity Sphere for a Greater East Asia." Generally referred to casually as a policy of "Asia for the Asiatics," this label gives no hint of the subtle cleverness of Japanese propaganda methods. The white man had become too much out of sympathy with Asiatic thought to appreciate the skill of the Japanese in stimulating for their own ends the revival of the archaic cultural forces that was gaining momentum throughout Asia.

Not until Otto D. Tolischus recently called attention in *The New York Times* to a booklet issued in Tokyo in February, 1942, by Professor Chikao Fujisawa, did it become at all widely realized that Japan had found in Shinto mythology a ready-made ideology distinct from that of the Nazis, though parallel because in each case springing from

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primitive origins. An extract from this booklet will serve to make clear the main tenor of this ideology:

“The holy war launched by Japan will sooner or later awaken all nations to the cosmic truth that their respective national lives issued forth from the one absolute life-center embodied by the Emperor [descendant of the mythological Sun Goddess who founded the dynasty] and that peace and harmony cannot be realized otherwise than by reorganizing them into one all-embracing family system under the guidance of the Emperor. This noble idea should not be considered in any sense in the light of imperialism, under which weak nations are mercilessly subjugated. . . . In the prehistoric age mankind formed a single world-wide family system with the Emperor as its head, and Japan was highly respected as the land of the parents while all other lands were called lands of children or branch lands.”

And then, taking his cue from the Nazi method of inventing pseudoscientific evidence to support the Shinto-based ideology, Professor Fujisawa adds:

“Eminent scholars preoccupied with thoroughgoing researches regarding the prehistoric chronicles [*sic*] of Japan are unanimous in concluding that the cradle of mankind was neither the Pamir Plateau nor the banks of the Tigris and the Euphrates, but the middle mountainous region of the Japanese mainland. This new theory concerning the origins of humanity is attracting the keen at-

tention of those who confidently look to Japan's divine mission for the salvation of disoriented mankind."

Thus the Japanese propagandists, knowing the mystic oriental mind, disguised their base intentions under the cloak of a divine mission, which held out to its prospective victims the mirage of freedom and prosperity under the aegis of Japan's leadership in Asia. Disillusion, of course, follows quickly once a victim has been lured to its fate. The rosy picture tends to disappear when, in the wake of the armies of occupation, the bankers, merchants, and specially trained civil servants of the New Order arrive to exploit the country. The old currency is declared illegal and the Greater East Asia Development Corporation buys up just what it wants with the newly printed "military currency." The peasants starve as they are told to change over from rice cultivation to cotton, which Japan needs more. At last it becomes clear to all that it is "Asia for the Japanese."

But that is the final act. It has been preceded by years of skillful propaganda preparation. Because this is still in full blast against unconquered China, India, Ceylon, and the Middle East, it may be of more than academic interest to put on record the manner in which I have seen it at work during the last few years before the blow struck in southeastern Asia; how its pseudoscientific theorists have actually crossed the path of my own work; and finally some suggestions as to how we might have, and still may, combat it.

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An ostentatious show of respect for all Eastern religions was the first feeler Japan put forward to curry favor among the nations she intended to draw into her orbit. Others have written of her efforts to penetrate the Arab countries of the Near and Middle East by means of a professed interest in the well-being of Islam; and something of the same sort was attempted in the Dutch Indies, though there are very few Japanese Moslems to lend color to such a pretense.

Japan was better equipped to worm her way into the affections of the Buddhist nations of southeastern Asia: Ceylon, Siam, Burma, and Indo-China. The fact that the peoples of these countries mostly follow the Lesser Vehicle, or Southern Buddhism, whereas the Japanese Buddhist sects adhere to Northern Buddhism, was not allowed to be an obstacle. To flatter the Southern Buddhists, the Japanese began to introduce Southern practices.

In the spring of 1941 they staged in Tokyo, rather as an exotic spectacle than as a serious religious occasion, the Visak ceremony, the greatest annual festival of the Southern Buddhists. Commenting on it, the *Japan Times and Advertiser* of May 30, 1941, remarked:

"This holy practice, typical of Southern Buddhism, was not known to the Buddhists in this country before, and the International Buddhist Society, which has been anxious to establish closer ties between the Buddhists of the Northern and Southern schools, has recently decided to introduce this beautiful custom of Southern Buddhism."



The next step was to try to inculcate among their prospective victims an interest in Northern Buddhism, with its easier road to Nirvana. To this end specially trained "missionaries" were sent on good-will missions throughout the Southern Buddhist countries. The special significance of this overseas effort was that at home Buddhism was being brought into line with Shinto ideology. To this end Japanese Buddhists were being officially taught to conceive the Buddhas of Northern Buddhism as being the derivatives of Shinto gods, who were the original entities. Thus the Buddha known in Northern Buddhism as the Great Illuminator was identified with the Sun Goddess, divine ancestress of the Emperor and of the whole Japanese people. The aim of the Japanese International Buddhist Missionaries is thus to lead the Southern Buddhist nations by easy stages, through the Japanese so-called "true Buddhism," to the worship of the Japanese Emperor. Already the image of the Sun Goddess has been installed in a specially built shrine at Nanking.

At the same time the Japanese propagandists were at work to encourage the exaggerated nationalism that was everywhere springing up throughout the East as the educated classes in each country began to feel that they had mastered Western ways and at the same time were rediscovering the import of their own cultural heritages. Here the Japanese aim was to stir up trouble in advance, so that conquest of countries at odds with their European masters would be easy. This indeed proved to be the case, especially in Burma where the Japanese had found the Burman monks the most willing accomplices. Such was the

revulsion of feeling against European rule, and unfortunately parallel conditions seem to exist in India, that a majority of the people were only too ready to credit tempting Japanese promises, notwithstanding the example of the treatment meted out to the Chinese under Wang Chin-wei's puppet regime.

In their propaganda intended to feed the fires of nationalism in southeastern Asia, the Japanese employed all the cunning pseudoscientific racial and historical arguments first used by the Nazis, carefully adapting them to oriental conditions. An example of the influence of these ideas is seen in the success with which the Siamese militarist clique tricked the West into accepting the new name Thailand for Siam. It has now been officially rejected in England and I have no intention of doing anything to perpetuate the hoax in this book. The fact is that we have here a play on words. The word Thai certainly can mean "free," but it is also the indigenous name of all people of Siamese stock, as well as the Shans of Burma and the Laos of northern Indo-China. Thus while "Thailand" was presented to the world as a country having the very laudable intention of remaining free and defending its neutrality, for internal consumption the change signified that Siam intended to embark on a programme of aggression, with the object of absorbing its weaker neighbors of Thai stock, so soon as British and French protection should become sufficiently inoperative to allow it.

Siam's geographical position gave it in Japanese eyes a special strategic importance from the point of view of outflanking Singapore, that most formidable of obstacles in

the path of Japan's ambitions. It was of the utmost importance to win over Siam, if possible without arousing the suspicions of her neighbors, who were in a much better position to occupy that country at short notice than was Japan.

Using the Siamese dictatorship as a pawn, the Japanese encouraged over a period of years a new spirit of nationalism which eventually had the effect of inflaming the masses with a desire to regain the lost provinces, particularly those ceded to France in 1893. The campaign began in a seemingly harmless and almost ludicrous manner. I remember one of the first manifestations when I happened to be in Bangkok in 1936. It was the occasion of one of those many public holidays when it was the custom to decorate and illuminate the government buildings and other similar places. This time a novelty suddenly made its appearance in one of the public gardens. It took the form of a flower bed attractively planted to resemble a great map of Siam as it would have appeared were all the lost territories restored to it. It was good propaganda. The map was admired by hundreds of thousands of Bangkok citizens and their country cousins before its existence and possible political implications reached the notice of the British and the French ministers. Before they could lodge a formal and joint complaint at the Foreign Office, lo and behold the flowers had faded, and the Siamese authorities were able to profess a sublime ignorance of the whole affair.

The fall of France gave the Siamese the longed-for opportunity to satisfy their territorial claims against the help-

less Indo-China government, subjected as it was to simultaneous Japanese pressure. Shortsightedly, in return for Japanese support at this time the Siamese entered into agreements which were to involve the loss of their independence. But knowing nothing of this, Britain and the United States hoped that the settlement with Indo-China meant an end of Siamese irridentism. After all, there was much justice in the claims Siam had put forward.

Unfortunately these had only added fuel to the flames of Siam's hopes for aggrandizement. Acting under Japanese "advice," the Siamese government now cast covetous glances at the northern Malay States handed over to Britain in 1909, and the Shan states which had never belonged to Siam but whose people were of the Thai stock. The Shans had no close relationship to the Burmans although included in Burma. The fact that such ethnological considerations had carried no weight with the European empire builders favored Japanese cultural propaganda. The reorganized Royal Institute devoted its time to making such matters more widely known and to reviving the royal ballet which had fallen into disesteem with the decay of the monarchy. The object of the latter was that it was thought useful to re-enact for the public edification dramas exalting Siamese heroes of the past, suitably refurbished to encourage the new aggressive spirit. Meanwhile the army took up archaeology, opened a museum near its headquarters at Lopburi, and began excavations. Possibly the object was to establish Siamese claims to the status of "honorary Aryans." We shall probably never know, for all this pleasant dream was suddenly brought

to an end in December, 1941, by the arrival of the Japanese army of occupation. I can only hope that the large class of Siamese moderates are deriving some consolation from the memory that in 1632 a Siamese ruler succeeded in massacring a band of Japanese adventurers who had gained a stranglehold on the court of his predecessor. For whatever may be true of history elsewhere, in Siam it has a strange way of repeating itself.

Malaya, the Dutch Indies, and the Philippines must have presented a complex but intriguing problem for Japanese propagandists. Though populated in the main by various branches of the Malayo-Polynesian race, every stage in political evolution was represented among them. While some groups were hopelessly backward and inert, others were in danger of accepting westernization in the American or the European form and the promise of real or near freedom. On the other hand, on racial grounds Japan had just as good grounds for enlisting sympathy among these peoples as she had with those of the mainland, for she could point to the large proportion of Indonesian blood in Japanese stock. Undoubtedly she would have used the same powerful argument in Madagascar had she not been forestalled by the British in the occupation of that strategic island. It is known that the Malagasy people of Madagascar accomplished the amazing journey from Sumatra two thousand years ago in open dugout canoes.

But it was when they turned to history that Japan's skillful propagandists found ready to hand material that seemed most likely to enlist Indonesian sympathy for the

New Order. They sought to revive the idea of the "Malay Empire." Now to Westerners, used to thinking in terms of European imperialism in southeastern Asia, the statement that a native empire once existed in that part of the world may come as a novelty. Indeed, the fact of its former existence is known to few Americans and Europeans other than the scholars who for several decades have been piecing together the evidence.

From frequent references in old Chinese, Persian, and Arab records it has been established that from the ninth to the twelfth century A.D. the Malay Peninsula and most of the Dutch Indies together formed a great empire whose wealth and power make it comparable to the better-known empires of antiquity. Its founder, generally referred to as the "Maharaja, King of the Mountain and Lord of the Isles," was fully the equal of his great contemporary to the north, the Emperor of Cambodia. As witness of his culture he left such monuments as the great Borobodur, known to every modern tourist who visits Java. Among the Arab travelers who reached his court was our old friend of the Arabian Nights, Sindbad the Sailor. What most impressed him was the Maharaja's habit of sitting every morning in his palace facing a lake into which he threw a golden brick brought by an attendant. The lake was tidal, and the golden bricks were exposed at low tide and shone in the sunlight. Then the king would exclaim delightedly, "Behold my treasury!"

Such stories of former greatness would appeal to the simple Malays of today. Cockfighting too, now frowned upon by the British, was allowed, though the owner of a

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winning cock had either to deliver one of its legs to the king or redeem its weight in gold. After all, the gold bricks did not grow of themselves. But the people were wealthy enough for all that. This was because it was they themselves, not foreigners, who reaped the benefits of trade and the exploitation of raw materials such as gold, tin, and spices. But the implications of one point made clear in the old chronicles must have primarily interested the Japanese. Unlike the British centuries later, the Maharaja did not rely on his command of the sea. He took good care to extend his control over the land route across the Malay Peninsula so that no hostile power could threaten his capital from the north. And where, by the way, was his capital?

That was just the difficulty, for it was precisely here that the experts failed to agree. French opinion had as long ago as 1918 placed the capital in the neighborhood of Palembang in Sumatra, best known nowadays for its oil refineries. Absence of suitable remains in that district was the main reason for a Dutch investigator to prefer a site in Java. Later an Indian scholar and I took up the cudgels. Though working independently, both of us arrived at the conclusion that the Maharaja's capital must be sought somewhere in the Malay Peninsula. But while in 1935 I believed that I had discovered the site in South Siam, three years later I changed my views in favor of a spot near Ipoh, the modern tin center of the Federated Malay States.

Now the Japanese had been following these researches with interest throughout. In 1940 a friend of mine, cog-

nizant of the Japanese literature on the subject, informed me that my latest views had already been translated by a Tokyo professor. It was not that the Japanese were in any way anxious to clear up the problem as to the location of this old capital city. On the contrary, the prevailing doubt in the minds of Orientalists suited them admirably. It enabled them, with that semblance of truth that Axis propagandists find serves them so well, to gratify the pride of whichever people they might at the moment be seeking to impress. The Javanese and the Sumatrans and the Malays could all be assured that their country, in accordance with its history and noble traditions, would become the center of the new Indonesia. At the same time the Siamese were being congratulated on having absorbed the most important slice of the territory of a once mighty empire.

The Malay Empire idea was even carried to the Philippines, which had never formed part of the dominions of the Maharaja. This came to my knowledge in 1940 when I was in North Sumatra. A news item in a Dutch newspaper mentioned unsuspectingly that the son of a certain Sumatran sultan was at the time lecturing in the Philippines. His object was to convince the Filipinos of the advantages that would accrue to all if the various branches of the Malay race could unite under one political banner. As their heroic resistance made plain, neither this nor any other form of Japanese propaganda made headway among the Filipinos, already assured of freedom as they were. Elsewhere the evidence is less clear. In Malaya, whatever the people had been led to expect, disillusion must have followed the Japanese occupation with characteristic



speed. There were no golden bricks, only worthless paper money. If any of the local inhabitants were singled out for preferential treatment, it was not the Malays or the Chinese, who no longer mattered, but the leading Indian residents, one of whom it was reported had been made "Governor of Penang." The reason, of course, was clear. India was as yet unconquered. In case the Nationalist leaders did not prove amenable it would be necessary to train a Quisling or two.

The irony of the whole thing is that Japanese propaganda has throughout been founded on the utilization and perversion of the results obtained by patient and disinterested European investigators. At the same time the complacent colonial governments did not think it worth while to inquire closely into the basis of this propaganda. Nor did they consider whether savants could place at their disposal the means to counteract it. Had they done so, they might have made the important discovery that the rulers and people of the old Malay Empire, though racially largely of Malay stock, owed their wealth and culture solely to their absorption of Indian ideas. Without the slightest distortion of the truth the European colonial governments could have offset the upstart claims of Japan to leadership in Asia by giving due weight to the civilizing influences reaching southeastern Asia from India during the last two thousand years.

Naturally, with British responsibility for India any initiative in such matters would have been primarily a matter for the British government. Educated Indians were still too occupied with their fight for freedom. That the

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government took no such initiative but left the field clear to the Japanese can scarcely have been entirely due to ignorance. Perhaps it would have conflicted in some way with imperial policy.

An official Greater Indian campaign of counterpropaganda could have been useful in two ways in the critical months that preceded Japan's bid for empire. In the first place it might have served to shake the growing fascination of the peoples of southeastern Asia with Japan's meteoric rise by exposing the inconsistencies in Japanese claims and reminding the natives of their cultural connections with India. This might have carried great weight in Java, whose people remained fully conscious of their basically Indian culture; while until recent years both Siam and Burma were proud of their Indian cultural ties and traditions. Secondly, for domestic Indian consumption the emphasis on a Greater Indian policy might have done much to supplement such remote and uninspiring assertions as the oft repeated "Singapore in enemy hands would be a pistol pointed at the heart of India." In view of the place which religious and cultural considerations hold in the Indian mind, to stress the historical connections of southeastern Asia with India in her Golden Age, stories of which are still the delight of every peasant, would have gone far not only to arouse the interest of the Indian fighting men but, no less important, of his relatives left behind in their village and by no means unexposed to the pressure of Axis propaganda.

Naturally the imperialist would be quick to imagine that if the Indians were encouraged to become interested

in countries owing their civilization primarily to Indian sources, they might become even less satisfied than they are that their present-day connection with Malaya, for example, was limited to the role of the small shopkeeper and rubber-estate coolie. They might, like Siam under Japanese influence, even wish to dispute the ownership of the European colonies. As a British officer put it to me in 1941 in Malaya, "This is a fine country for Indians; I imagine a lot of these soldiers are making comparisons and won't be so anxious to go home after the war." That might very well be the case, but it does not justify us in imputing to Indians the Western conception of imperialism. Certainly there is nothing in history to support such a view.

For centuries before the arrival of the European pioneers southeastern Asia lay at the mercy of the Indians. With their greater wisdom and superior technical ability, they could have exploited these rich lands in any way they saw fit. The ban by which an Indian of high birth lost caste if he crossed the ocean did not then exist; and during the first few centuries of the Christian era Indians, mainly from South India, poured across the Bay of Bengal. They found many small states already organized under their own rulers and possessed of a simple type of Pacific culture. The people were by no means savages. Like the early European merchants, the Indians came first as traders. As time went on they remained to settle, as only the Dutch did to any extent among the Europeans. But they did not overthrow the local sovereigns.

The Indians were welcomed on account of their su-

perior knowledge. The Brahman priests who always accompanied the merchants converted the native kings to Hinduism and reorganized their systems of government on Indian lines. It was thus an entirely peaceful penetration. The Indian settlers married native women, and a composite though mainly Indian culture grew up. India never exercised political control over these distant lands. With the coming of the Moslem invasion and the lessening of the spirit of overseas adventure, India and her cultural offspring drifted apart imperceptibly and peacefully. Later the Indianized Malay Empire of the King of the Mountain could compete commercially on equal terms with the kingdoms of South India. The Cambodian Empire forgot that it was not the original home of Indian culture. These great offshoots of early Indian enterprise had, centuries before the Statute of Westminster, achieved the benefits of belonging to a Commonwealth of Nations without having had to experience the galling limitations of a colonial period of transition.

China has been similarly misunderstood and mishandled by the Western powers. Despite the survival of Chinese political independence, largely as a result of American influence, China was reduced to a state of economic semi-dependence as a result of those adjuncts of the Open Door policy—extraterritoriality, control of customs, and the establishment of foreign concessions. The limitations placed on her sovereignty led to loss of face in the eyes of the smaller Asiatic nations. At the same time Japan's evolution as a modern power was being encouraged by the West largely in order to offset the threat of Russian far

eastern expansion. China's own internal troubles, during the long unsettled period during which she sought to adapt herself to Western ways, contributed to her decline, until in 1928 she achieved a more stable national government. But even the example set by her heroic resistance to the aggressor could not at once offset the impression produced in the eyes of her lesser neighbors by the long decades of decline during which China became incapable of playing her traditional role of "Elder Brother."

The Western imperialists could have had no valid reason to fear the competition of China despite her great size and population. She had long since reached her territorial limits. Annam is an example of a country which, though it had absorbed Chinese culture to the full, had retained its political integrity for centuries, though situated on China's borders. The huge overseas Chinese populations in the European colonies had no political aspirations. In Siam the large Chinese commercial community offered no threat to that country's independence, outside the imagination of the Japanese propagandists. They had always been easily controlled and were essential to the country's economy as rice millers and middlemen, so long as the Siamese continued to take little or no interest in commerce.

Though most of the countries of southeastern Asia owed more to Indian culture than they did to Chinese, intercourse with India tended to lessen in the Middle Ages as that great subcontinent became increasingly occupied with its own affairs. But trade relations between China and southeastern Asia flourished exceedingly, and the former was therefore interested in her small neighbors remaining

at peace. They could appeal to the good offices of China as their "Elder Brother" without compromising their independence, nor did such appeals necessarily imply the acceptance of Chinese suzerainty. If China seldom actually went so far as to intervene actively in order to settle disputes between the neighboring kings, a mere threat was often sufficient to restore order. And what minor oriental monarch could resist, as a reward conferred by the emperor for renunciation of force, some such high-sounding if quite empty title as "General of the Pacified South"?

Such is the traditional background that one must take into consideration when evaluating the extent to which the Western democracies have been deprived of the potential cultural support of India and China in waging political warfare against the shoddy fascism-perverted religious influences and propaganda of Japan.

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## CONCLUSION

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IN THIS book I have sought to trace the development of two parallel and conflicting trends—firstly, the negative or downward trend of the white man in Asia, the disintegration of the old-fashioned imperialism; and secondly, the positive, upward surge of the Asiatics, struggling for freedom. Before I draw the conclusions that the evidence I have accumulated renders inevitable, and pregnant with significance for the future of mankind as they must be, it may be useful to recapitulate in tabular form the factors that my inquiry has shown to be responsible.

The main underlying causes of the downward trend of the white man in Asia have been:

(1) The increasing lassitude and complacency of individuals resident in the East. This resulted from the growing ease and luxury of a life from which the hardships of pioneer conditions had generally disappeared. There was no longer the same necessity for constant alertness and preparedness to act in an emergency on personal initiative.

This factor was a dominant one particularly in the rich,

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raw-material producing colonies. With the French, who were fine explorers but poor colonists, a fact to which their respect for Indo-Chinese art has tended to blind many, hatred of exile led to the practice of the various extravagant forms of escapism I have touched upon in Chapter 12. With the Dutch, on the other hand, there was a tendency to reproduce, oblivious to the dangers gathering around, the quiet comfortable life of provincial Holland.

(2) There was a feeling both at home and in the East of satisfaction with the *status quo*, as a result of which colonial governments were lulled into a false sense of security. The basis of this was implicit trust in the strong arm of the British Navy, and the supposition that no foreign power would challenge its supremacy.

The speed of modern communications gave the unsound impression that, even in the absence of much evidence of the British fleet, help could in fact arrive at short notice. Thus there was no feeling of isolation and imminence of danger. As a result, until it was almost too late, no steps were taken to safeguard the overland route of aggression by which Japan eventually advanced to the threshold of Singapore. There was delay on the part of the colonial powers to plan for a common defense of their possessions in East Asia. There was failure to train the whole Malay population for guerilla warfare, the effect of which might well have been to have made the Japanese progress down the Peninsula vastly more difficult.

(3) International strife among the white men in two world wars led to impairment of prestige in Asiatic eyes. Loss of face followed the Russo-Japanese war and this in-



creased with the further Japanese successes in this war. Disunity in home politics and class warfare were largely engendered by disagreement on colonial policy.

(4) Failure of the liberal policy, whether of progressive preparation for self-government by large steps (British), by small steps (Dutch), or by the policy of assimilation (French). The liberal policy entailed ever increasing compromise and concessions, interpreted by the Asiatics as weakness and stimulating the growth of an active, militant nationalism in all the countries of the Orient, whether partially or wholly under white domination. The white man's refusal to accept the fact that Asia would not accept *in toto* the transplanted institutions of the West, except as stepping stones toward freedom, was the cause of much bitterness.

(5) An ever increasing *aloofness of the white man from the Asiatic*, both physically and mentally, I consider to be, in view of the difficulty of overcoming it, the most serious omen for the improvement of relations between East and West. This aloofness resulted from a drawing apart both in material and cultural spheres. In regard to the first, the cessation of intermarriage following the arrival of large numbers of white women in the East meant more than the mere passing of physical concubinage. What it signifies is perhaps made most evident in those occasional cases in which Europeans do still actually marry Asiatic women of birth and education. These Asiatic wives are likely to be quite westernized on the surface, and even possessed of a Parisian or an American education. That entails a very

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different bias to social intercourse from that implied by the menage of the early British Resident at Hyderabad I mentioned in Chapter 4 who "married a Muslim lady of rank."

With the cessation of intermarriage the Eurasians of the Dutch Indies, a powerful group who had formed a valuable link between white rulers and Asiatic subjects, tended to become estranged from the whites and to throw in their lot with the educated Asiatic nationalists.

In the cultural sphere aloofness developed with the increasing certainty of the Europeans of the superiority of Western knowledge, the desire to convert and teach, to the exclusion of an earlier willingness to learn from the wondrous stores of wisdom of the Orient. With more Western-educated natives available to act as intermediaries, the white man's knowledge of the country, the languages and customs of the Asiatics tended to deteriorate. The scholar-administrator disappeared and with him a realization that Asia's problems are cultural rather than political.

In India the army, still largely officered by Europeans, remained as the chief visible symbol of a regime that in spirit was behind the times, and unable to cope effectively with Gandhian nationalism that, at least in theory, tended to work more and more on a nonmaterial plane. Lack of appreciation of the rising power of revived indigenous culture, erroneously believed by Europeans to be dead or dying, further stood in the way of our appreciation of the effectiveness of Japanese propaganda.

Turning now to the main causes of the upward surge of the Asiatics, we can distinguish two of supreme importance. They are:

(1) The mastery of Western material methods, thus pricking the bubble of white technical superiority, for on the spiritual plane the Asiatics had never felt any inferiority. From Persia and Turkey all the way to Japan, Asiatics wanted nothing from the white man except his technique. Where Asiatic rule survived under monarchical regimes, they began to obtain this vital knowledge through the medium of European advisers. Both there and in countries under white rule, the real objectives of the Asiatic leaders were masked by an eagerness to learn, while others, especially traders and clerks, appeared satisfied at being able to get a share of the spoils of exploitation.

This stage was the golden era for the European in the East. In India it lasted up to the close of last century; in Indo-China a little later; in Siam up to the change of regime in 1932; in western China up to the present day; in Malaya and the outer Dutch Indian islands it has hardly begun. The rule seems to be that no sooner is there a considerable class educated on Western lines than it shows itself desirous of throwing off European tutelage, and of getting rid of its own Asiatic princes, if any, who, fearful for their own position, are usually in no great hurry to encourage change.

Having mastered the theory, the next step was to try to put it into practice for the purpose of actually attaining freedom from European control and monopoly. Prior to making open war against the West, which was out of the

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question for any but Japan, at any rate immediately, this took the form of challenging the Western monopoly of Eastern markets. But except in India, where British fairness allowed Indian industrialization to compete with home manufactures, the European colonies were prevented from following a like programme by lack of capital and governmental hostility. But Japanese commerce took the East by storm. Its success was reflected in the conclusion of the Ottawa agreement of 1932, when in accordance with the new policy of "imperial preference" many British Empire countries erected tariffs against Japanese competition.

(2) Having passed successfully through the subservient imitative phase in the material sphere, there was a spiritual revulsion of feeling among Asiatics. They realized anew the value of their own cultural heritage which they had been temporarily willing to put aside. In India, Gandhi has been the great apostle of the revival of spiritual power. His teaching has been particularly effective in harnessing the masses for political purposes, but it has also impressed the educated classes, at least of the Hindus. He has been aided by the survival of purdah, which as a means of preserving the influence of ancient cultural ideas on the young has powerfully affected every high-caste Indian in a manner that no amount of later Western education can entirely undo.

At the same time Japan's military caste, reaffirming faith in the emperor's divine mission while they dropped all pretense of democracy, perfected propaganda methods that they skillfully combined with geopolitical ideas bor-

## YEARS OF BLINDNESS

rowed from the Nazis. Armed with this weapon they set about encouraging nationalism and enthusiasm for the New Order among the subject peoples of Asia.

Such then would have been the plain straightforward issue between the white man and the Asiatic, had it not been complicated by the temporary failure of the Asiatics to agree among themselves. Thus we have seen the white man's hand strengthened by disagreement among the various nationalist parties in China, Java, Siam, and especially in Burma and India. Much hatred in the colonial territories has also been deflected against the immigrant Asiatics.

Finally we have seen Japan, forced by internal stresses resulting from a too rapid, one-sided westernization to covet the imperial heritage that the Western democracies were making ready to discard, turning traitor to the Asiatics whose cause she might have championed and from sheer convenience throwing in her lot with the European "have-nots." That at least clarifies our immediate course. Our first duty is to defeat Japan along with her Axis partners. In doing that we are merely fighting for survival, for otherwise there can be no freedom either for us or for Asia.

In a speech he made in New York on April 23, 1942, Lord Beaverbrook, in reviewing the course of the war, said: "Then came the Japs. They caught us unawares in Malaya and Singapore. We have little to say in defense of our errors. *We cannot explain our failures.*" While such self-consciousness and reluctance to investigate so shortly after defeat may be excusable, it is surely a luxury we can-

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not afford to indulge while waging total war. But at least there is an honest admission that there were errors, that all was not due to the contributory cause that Britain had so many other commitments on her hands at that time.

Perhaps my book may help to clarify the nature of some of the deep-seated errors that have not ceased to have a bearing on the progress of the war in Asia. Some are strategical and can easily recur. Some arise from the fact that we still seem to find it difficult to appreciate the fact that the vast majority of our allies, or potential allies, in this war are Asiatics. Whatever may be the value of our air and naval might, victory in the Pacific may yet largely depend on Chinese and Indian manpower. Despite all that has happened in China, many of our potential Asiatic allies are still in doubt as to whether their best interests do not lie with Japan. Unless we hasten to overcome their distrust and resentment, arising from our lack of sympathy for their outlook, we may still find victory elusive.

But the implication of the trends I have endeavored to elucidate in this book is for far wider horizons than the immediate future. In chapter after chapter the fact has emerged that when we have settled accounts with Japan we shall still be left with the infinitely larger question of our future relations with Asia as a whole. Problems that have forced themselves on the notice not only of Britain but of America are forming in India and are hastening toward a grand climax in every country in Asia. Well may we ask ourselves if the loss of Singapore must not be regarded as the epitaph on a system. Even the most optimistic British conservative can hardly expect to see the old order revived

in its entirety after the war. If we are realistic, we must now recognize, in view of the overwhelming evidence, that no Asiatic nation that is in any degree politically minded is likely to acquiesce willingly to a further, possibly indefinite, period of foreign tutelage.

We know that we are fighting for democracy, and most of the leaders of our Asiatic allies profess interest in democratic principles and tell us they intend to give the illiterate masses the education that it was beyond our power to bring to them. We also know—the point has been brought out clearly in this book—that so far the attempt to introduce democratic principles of government in Asia has been a failure. If the Philippines are the main exception they are, as I pointed out earlier, a misleading one.

Are we then to conclude that there is little hope for democracy in Asia? I do not think so. Democracy has not yet had a fair test in Asia—firstly because, with the possible exception of Siam, and she was not given time to pass through her transition, no colony or semicolony has had opportunity for free experimentation; and secondly, it has for the most part been presented to the East in purely Western form. That is why there is little reason to suppose that democracy has as yet made much genuine appeal to Asiatic nationalists except as a weapon to aid them in getting rid of white rule.

The nationalists have for the most part made it quite clear that when they are free they intend to decide on their own form of government. The clause of the Atlantic Charter to which they cling most hopefully is the one which states that America and Britain “respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of Government under which

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they will live." In face of that it is scarcely possible to believe that the white man contemplates the totalitarian absurdity of forcing democracy upon Asia, even if he still had the power.

There is in fact no reason to fear that free Asiatics will be less ready to utilize our democratic principles of government than they have been to make use of our other technical inventions; and they will have observed the fate of fascism. But nevertheless we must expect them to be eclectic. We must remember that semi-Oriental Russia also took what she wanted from the West, in her case rapid industrialization, and then evolved a new system of her own—communism. We do not like communism, but we make a military alliance with Russia, and some of us hope for cooperation with her after the war. In Asia the revival of confidence in the traditional culture means that we cannot expect purely Western forms, unadapted to Asiatic thought and conditions, to find acceptance.

So would it not be advisable for the reconstructionists who talk of a postwar United Nations, into which they hope to fit a cooperative and free Asia, to plan only in the widest terms? Let them visualize something which at first must be of the most elastic nature, offering a welcome to any nation desirous of living at peace with its neighbors. Protected from external aggression by some form of collective security, shared in equally by the Asiatics, there would within this loose organization be opportunity for each nation freely to work out through experience—a hard school but the only really effective one—the type of self-government that best suits it.

To continue to ram our unwanted institutions, perhaps a



new planned economy instead of the old laissez faire, down Asiatic throats will be to court disaster. Necessarily there must be a continued period of tutelage, whether international or otherwise, for the backward areas of Africa, and such regions in Asia as the outer islands of the Dutch Indies, if only "to further the enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access on equal terms to trade and to the raw materials of the world which are needed for their economic prosperity." But we shall have to go warily when we talk of internationalism to countries like China, India, Burma, Siam, Annam, and Java, who are at the moment so obsessed with the idea of nationalism. Will they not perhaps be inclined to suspect that our new idea of interdependence is just one more trick to cheat them of their independence?

Our great difficulty is going to be that the leaders with whom we have to deal are men who have been fighting us for their freedom all these years. Their hearts are full of antagonism and resentment. The gulf of misunderstanding is now so wide that even such an excellent practical step as the American and British decision to relinquish extraterritorial rights in China can scarcely go far to dispel the prevailing atmosphere of distrust that has proved such an obstacle to negotiation in India.

What we need is a basic change in our attitude toward Asia. The most healthy sign that this may be on the way appeared soon after Pearl Harbor when Americans suddenly became more Asia-conscious and set about seriously learning Asiatic languages. Such a move is the first and most essential one toward repairing the mental isolation

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from oriental thought into which the white man has withdrawn for all too long.

Then we cannot but recognize China and India as leaders in Asia. We must acknowledge the validity of their spiritual and cultural heritage and the fact that they will no longer be dictated to by the West. We must not continue to try and foist our unmodified Western ideas upon an unwilling Asia; for it is proven that we can be no more successful in this than in forcing them forever to accept a physical bondage. There must be a new spirit of accommodation which may prepare the way for an eventual economic, social, and cultural synthesis. Such a consummation alone can draw East and West together in lasting bonds of mutual understanding and permanent peace.

Failing this, I foresee a terrible alternative. And I see it with the eye not of one who is likely to be blinded with the "immediacy" of the pressing events of the moment, but of one who is used to contemplating the endless panorama of history; one who is used to noting not only such common events as merely change the course of history, but also those occasional ghastly catastrophes that wipe out whole civilizations. Sometimes they seem unaccountably swept away, leaving in their wake nothing but an arid desert, or it may be a jungle, the haunt of wild beasts.

Just now there seems to be the possibility that one such cataclysm, differing from anything that has gone before by reason of its magnitude, is threatening to take shape. Asia has awakened and is alive to its danger. The one lesson we could not teach Asiatics by our own example, even had it fitted in with our divide and rule policies, they are

on the brink of learning for themselves. Asiatics everywhere are making desperate efforts to get together. We cannot count on their remaining divided forever. They may find and eat of the fruit of the Tree of Unity before we do, with all our theoretical reconstructionalism. Then woe betide us if we have not by that time reached an understanding with them.

Already Lin Yutang and Jawaharlal Nehru are planning a union between their two great countries in the event that the white man refuses to apply to them the principles of the Atlantic Charter. They talk further of a great Asiatic bloc, as a balance to the United Nations, one comprising China, India, and Soviet Russia, a geographically compact bloc that would include 1,000,000,000 human beings, half the population of the world. Naturally they expect the minor Asiatic nations on their fringe to adhere.

Nowadays, despite all the mechanization, we realize that manpower still counts. Moreover, Lin Yutang does not hesitate to hint that Russia can teach the others to build tanks and aircraft; Russia can encourage every branch of their incipient industrialization, so that India and China could emerge as world powers within a generation.

That then may be the alternative the white man will soon have to face unless he offers Asia the hand of equality and freedom. It may well be the prelude to a catastrophe of well-nigh cosmic proportions—the clash of East and West like unto the clash of two hostile worlds in the midnight sky, with unpredictable results for man's civilization. It will be well for us to realize this while still we are the masters of our fate.

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